ISSUE 29 • FEBRUARY 1990 • £1.60

ACE

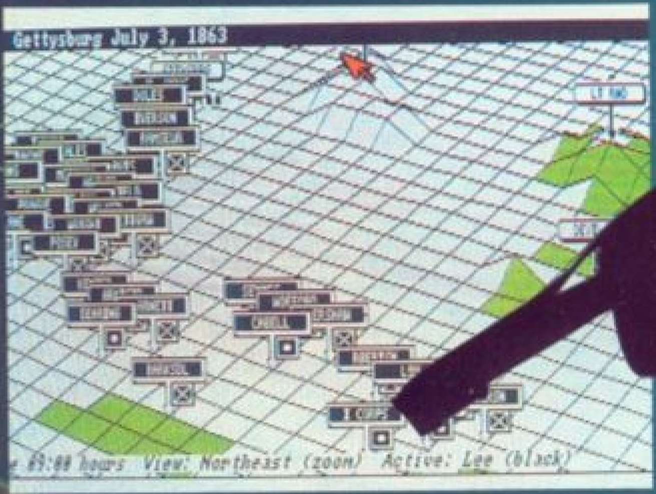
MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

■ ST ■ AMIGA ■ C64 ■
CPC ■ SPECTRUM ■ PC
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

WAR!

Could you survive in a life or death struggle against your micro? Find out in the ACE Guide To Computer Wargaming


Gettysburg July 3, 1863
09:00 hours View: Northeast (zoom) Active: Lee (black)

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

Check out the successor to Dungeon Master

X-OUT

Shoot-em-up sophistication hits an all-time high

32-BIT FANTASY

The first hardware designers take up the £20000 ACE Challenge

ISSN 0954-8076
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'ERE WE GO!

16 red-hot football sims reviewed and rated

TAKE THE LA

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THE FASTEST, MOST THRILLING 3D DRIVING GAME YET!

VOTED ARCADE GAME OF THE YEAR

Take the wheel of your turbo-charged Porsche as you and your partner go in pursuit of dangerous criminals all driving an evil array of souped-up roadsters.

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A CRASH Smash
TAITO

TAITO

TURBO BOOST! Need to catch up in a hurry? Well, just one press of your Turbo Button will leave your eyes in the back of your head!

BARRELLING THROUGH THE CITY STREETS, along the roughest of dirt tracks and through busy tunnels – if you can hold the line! The low life can run, but they can't hide …

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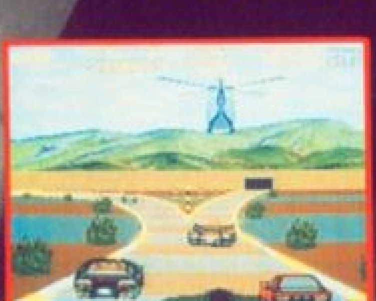
SCORE 1933747
TIME 21
DISTANCE
SPEED 107 km/h



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action sequences put you in control of Elliot Ness's elite squad of crime-busters.

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The Railway Station confrontation and Warehouse bust culminating in the thrilling denouement of a

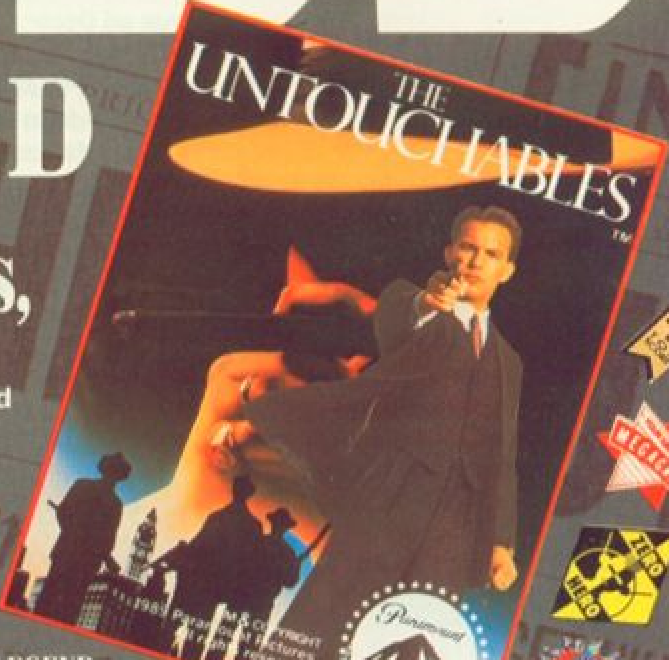
ROOFTOP DUEL

as you re-live the knife edge existence of Ness in his struggle against the retribution of Capone!

THE UNTOUCHABLES – LIVE AN AMERICAN LEGEND

"an absolute corker of a game ... as smooth and polished as you can get, animation is top notch ... a brilliant film conversion" Games Machine

"a fine example of how to do the job properly ... a cracking conversion ... easily one of the most successful licences to date" Sinclair User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BLOCKBUSTER FOLLOW-UP TO LAST CHRISTMAS'S No. 1 HIT... OPERATION WOLF...

NOW WITH TWICE THE ACTION, TWICE THE FUN, TWICE THE CHALLENGE

ROY ADAM IS BACK!

TAITO

The Hi-jack report came from a DC10 leaving Paris for Boston – Arab guerillas were in control of flight 102 and had turned the aircraft towards Africa ... The plane lands in hostile territory and the terrorists begin their demands ...

USE THE LASERSIGHT

or the bulletproof vest, but watch out for

AIR-TO-GROUND MISSILES

Operation Thunderbolt the incredible Taito coin-op conversion brought NOW to your home computer.

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

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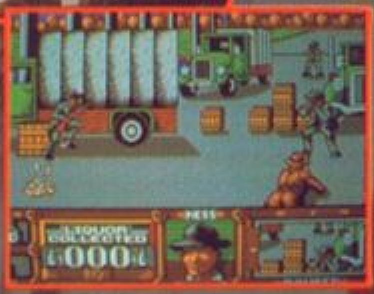
ES FROM...



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WAR! 31

From ***UMS*** to **Vietnam,** ACE brings you the **definitive report** on war-gaming. You **man the micro**, we'll **pass the ammunition**.

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$6000 A SECOND! 38

Meet John Lasseter. Meet his sprites. Find out how they **won an Oscar**.

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From the **dawn of computing history,** another barrage of **facts, fantasy, and nostalgia** as we check out 1984 and 1985: two **make-or-break** years for the world of computer entertainment.

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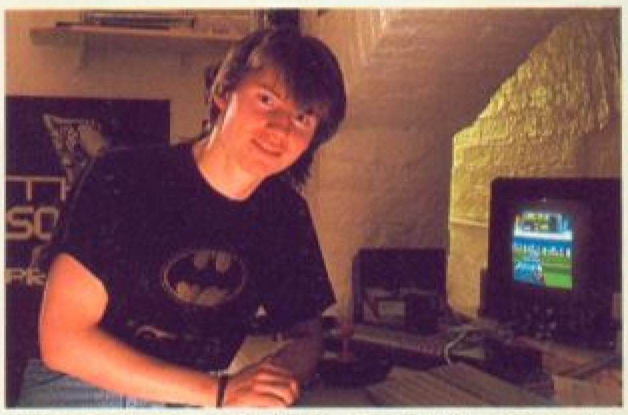
Are football games just a **load of old balls**? Not these ones, chum. We pinpoint 16 programs that **kick off** into 1990 at the very top of the **Micro Football League**.



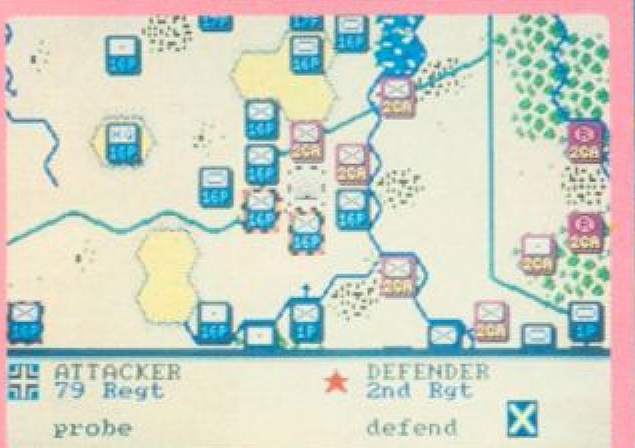
Ocean coder John O'Brien hiding out underground

OCEAN'S APART 84

Our mission: to carry out a **vicious attack** on British Rail's Euston ticket office. **The objective:** to secure travel authorisation to Outer Manchester, where we discover secret plans for a **tidal wave** of new games from Ocean.

ALL OUT WAR!

The Pentagon are using *UMS* to study military tactics: Heaven knows what they'll do with *UMS 2*. John Minson interviews some of the world's **top wargame programmers**, including Ezra 'UMS' Sidran, Peter Turcan of *Borodino* renown, and others. **Grab a flak jacket** and **take cover**.



RED HOT!

It may the middle of the Chilly Season, but this month's Screentest section has to be one of the hottest for a long time. There are more ACE-Rated games than anyone has a right to expect after Christmas, including the superlative *Chaos Strikes Back*, successor to *Dungeon Master*; *X-Out*, a knee-trembling shoot-em-up that must be one of the best blasts ever to hit a home micro; and for those of you who prefer brains to brawn, there's the infuriatingly addictive, highly challenging *Tower of Babel* from Microprose. In fact the only thing you won't find is our promised review of Miike Singleton's *Midwinter.* It's coming...It's coming....

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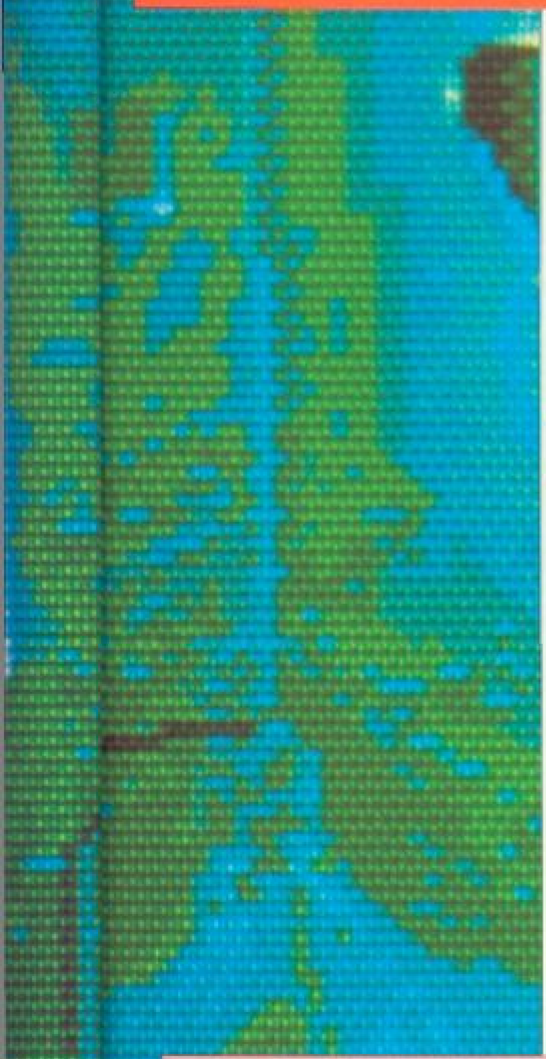
X-OUT *Rainbow Arts* 46

BONANZA!

Want to upgrade to an ST or Amiga? You can grab some great bargains

DEAR DIARY,

Here are our New Year Resolutions for 1990.
Firstly, we promise not to play Tetris or Kick Off during office hours.
Secondly, we promise not to take the Gameboy to the lavatory.
Thirdly, we undertake not to bully people who like adventure games.
And on no account will we mention anything to do with hair between the toes.
We shall be kind to software houses.
(sometimes).
We shall be unstinting in our search for The Perfect Game.
We shall make every effort to convince Joe Public that computer games are deserving of his serious attention.
We reserve the right to use force if necessary.
Finally, we will let our daughters marry aliens, if they absolutely insist.
(...and for some more serious New Year Resolutions, see page 8.)



THE FOOD OF LOVE 87

No, not **powdered rhinoceros horn**, but **music:** a whole selection of inexpensive but powerful musical widgets to link up to your micro. You want to be a pop star – **why wait?**

FACE THE CHALLENGE 27

Two young men think they've got a state-of-the-art **micro design** that makes the Amiga seem like a **techno-dinosaur**. Only problem is, can they build it? Or are they **wasting their time?**

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Enter **1990:** with some of **the best games ever!**

AAAGHGHGH! 71

You're in **big trouble**. Your only hope: the ACE **Tricks'n'-Tactics** section, which this month includes the Totally Comprehensive *Dungeon Master* Master Guide.

ACE NEW WORLDS 96

It's **horrific**. Pat Winstanley **shrieks with fear** in *Maniac Mansion*.

SWEET LICKS 23

John Cook **savages** the *Tetris*-inspired *Block Out* and sacrifices his loose change in the latest coin-ops. In for **10p**, in for a **pounding**.

SHOCKS AND SHARES

The ACE Stockmarket is really getting into the swing this month. You can find out how Cinemaware burst into the **Number One position** on the Company Counter with rave reviews of *It Came From The Desert*, which games are **top for your machine**, and whether you're going to win one of the **great software prizes** on offer.

System 3's *Myth* is taking top honours this month in the C64 and Spectrum charts – but who's taking the gold in the 16-bit ratings? Find out on pages 15 and 16.

TOP SECRET 18

ACE **goes undercover** and discovers an **electrifying new game** at Activision: is *David Wolf: Secret Agent* the nearest thing yet to a **true computer movie**?

***David Wolf: Secret Agent* from Activision.**

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Another **ACE Challenger**; a new **Walt Disney game** on the Nintendo; plus the advent of **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turltes....**

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Yet more **literary terrorism** as ACE readers strut their stuff on these **hallowed pages**. Pick up a pen and **declare war** with **words**..

THE SUB CLUB 36

Subscribers not only get a **free issue**, they receive a **whole new range of benefits**, including **InterfACE** – an **exclusive subscribers' newsletter.**

ACE STOCKMARKET 15

Britain's only games chart that goes by **authoritative opinion**, and not **hyped sales**.

IN THE PINK..............................99

Games you **have to have;** the **ACE Crossword**; the first **Stockmarket winners**; the **ACE Diary**; **special offers** from dealers; **small ads**; all **pink** and **proud of it**.

ACE UPGRADE VOUCHERS

with the ACE Upgrade Vouchers. And there's something for 16-bit owners too on p.113

ENTERTAINING YOUR P.C.

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Outstanding 3-D solid modelling graphics. Accurate mapping of San Francisco streets and landmarks. Real manoeuvrability. Test performance factors of each Corvette. Varying difficulty levels. Option to choose from 4 Corvettes. So get set, buckle up and rev up. But a word of caution – don't be too reckless or you might leave more than your heart in San Francisco!

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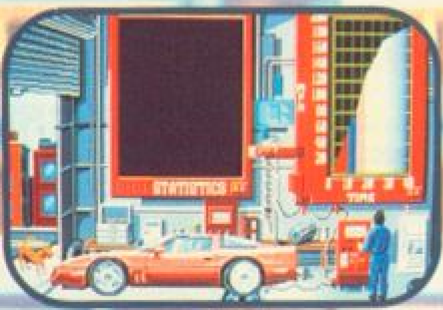

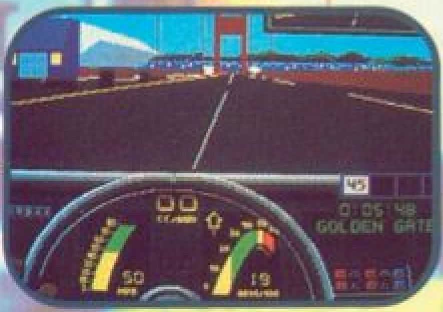

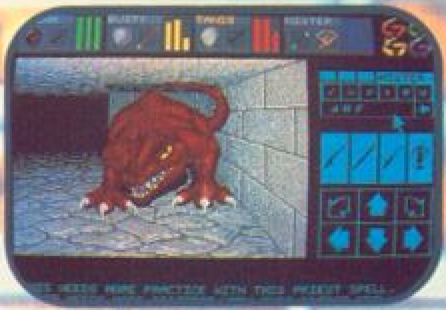

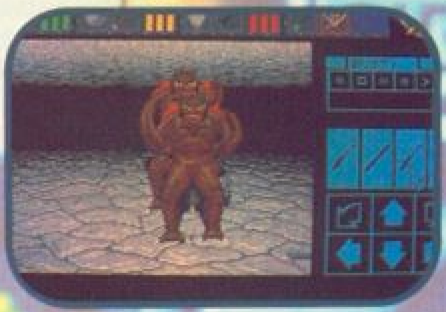

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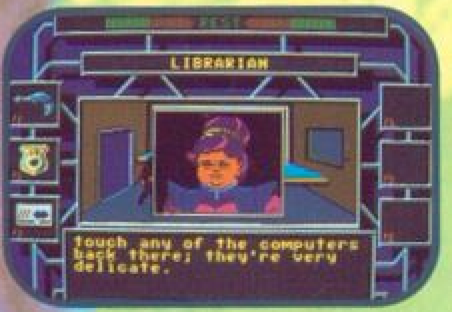
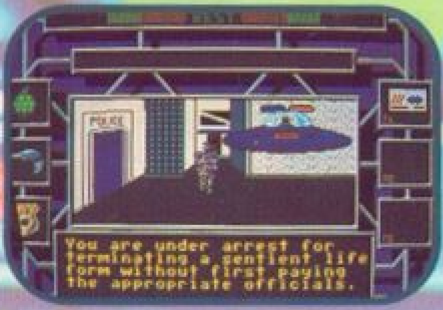
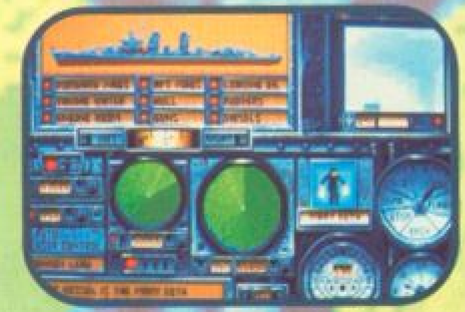
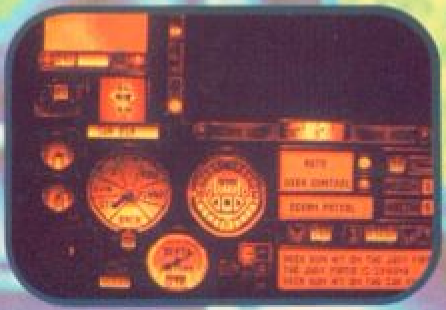


touch any of the computers back there; they're very delicate.



You are under arrest for terminating a sentient life form without first paying the appropriate officials.





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ACE NEWS

A NEW CONTENDER FOR THE ACE CHALLENGE...

WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY

Nintendo NES gameplayers will be able to "experience" the fun of Walt Disney's spectacular theme park thanks to Japanese games developer, Capcom. *Adventures in the Magic Kingdom* is set in LA's Disneyland and includes all the world famous attractions found there such as the Haunted Mansion, Space Mountain and (our personal favourite) Pirates of the Caribbean. If the game comes out on the hand-held Nintendo Game Boy you'll be able to play Pirates of the Caribbean while riding the real-thing! Also from Capcom is a Nintendo NES game based around the *Californian Raisins* – the cult characters from the brilliant "Heard it through the Grapevine" TV advert – appropriately called *The Grape Escape*. Both titles should be out during the Autumn.

Mickey and Co. can't wait to get their hands on a Nintendo NES console!

CYBER CHALLENGE

Hot on the heels of the TMB-PC (see page 27 for full details), comes another hardware design team to take up the £20000 ACE Challenge. Cybercube Research from Canada designs 32-bit parallel computer systems, does computer entertainment software research and development, produces custom designed computer systems, and thinks it can meet our challenge for the 90's.

Back in ACE 26 we issued the ACE Challenge to all hardware hacks out there in electro-land: to design a games machine that fulfilled our ten precepts, which included possessing a tritter, trigger and dejagger (check out the ACE Challenge Booklet for the full spec). The guys from Cybercube were pleased to see our approach to solving the problem of aging entertainment hardware, and has offered up their prototype Cybercube MINI system and Cybercube Phantom arcade deck as possible contenders. The current versions of MINI have three 32-bit RISC main processors each running at 30MIPS, up to 32Mb RAM, one Meg of Video RAM, up to 2Mb ROM, screen resolution of 256x192 with 16 on-screen colours out of a palette of 256 up to 1024x1024 mono from a palette of 256, and six FM stereo sound channels with 16-bit DSP with D/A and A/D convertors.

Look out for a full update on Cybercube in a future issue.

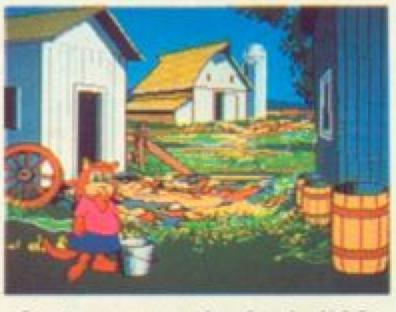
DOMARK TAKES INCENTIVE

Flushed with the success of its Tengen licence, Domark has announced a tie-in with Incentive, the guys behind the epic *Freescaping* games system. Domark will handle the sales side of Incentive's new release *Castle Master*, leaving the proggies to concentrate on code-cruising. *Castle Master* is an arcade puzzle adventure set in 16th Century England, and according to Incentive's founder Ian Andrew, "is the first action adventure to use 3D solid polygons". Expect to see it on a micro near you in early April.

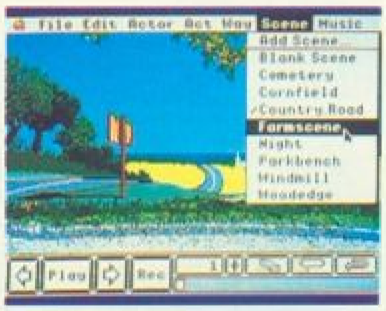
Domark and Incentive about to be done for loitering

CREATE THE CARTOON...

Innovative US software house Electronic Arts has announced the release of *Cartooners* for the PC. A previous award winner on the Apple IIGS, *Cartooners* is a cartoon studio which lets you create and animate cartoons with colourful characters, scenery and musical accompaniment. This is the first EA product to specifically target the 6-12 year-old user and quote: "it sparks the imagination, develops self-confidence and provides a playful, constructive environment for parent/child or teacher/child interaction". Let's just hope it provides a little fun! *Cartooners* is compatible with *DeluxePaint, DeluxePaint II, DeluxePaint II Enhanced* and also contains a printing option allowing you to create your own full-colour, illustrated storybooks – provided you've got a colour printer of course! *Cartooners* should be out later this month for £24.99dk.

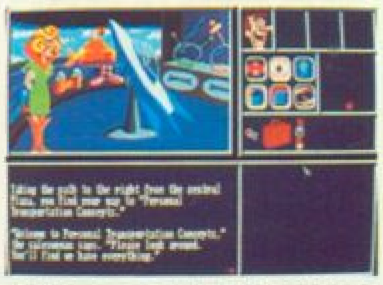


***Cartooners* on the Apple IIGS**



...OR PLAY IT!

Meanwhile Microillusions, the US software company famous for its *Music-X* Amiga music utility, is about to release four games based around those "timeless" American Hanna Barbara TV cartoons: *Scooby Doo, Flintstones, Jetsons* and *Johnny Quest*. ACE gamesters will already know of a *Scooby Doo* game from Elite and Grandslam's *Flintstones* arcade adventure. All graphic adventures, the first title (*Jetsons*) is due out in February on the PC.

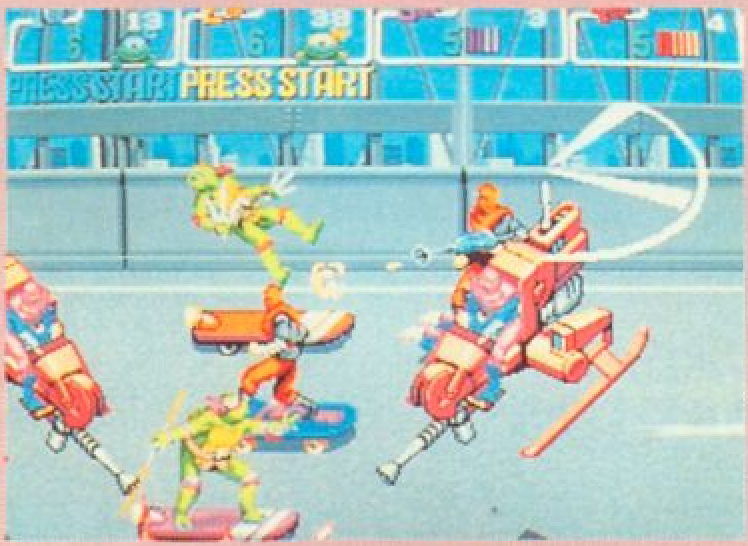


***Jetsons*: a cult TV cartoon series from the 60's, soon to be played on the cult micro of the 80's**

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE MANIA

Those crazy Yanks are at it again. First it was *Cabbage Patch Dolls*, then came *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, now the latest cutie kiddie craze to hit the good old USA is *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Not only can you watch the *TMNT* TV cartoon series on a Saturday morning, buy *TMNT* toys from the local Toys'R'Us store or chew *TMNT* bubblegum (in a variety of flavours) – but you can now play the *TMNT* game on coin-op, console or computer.

Leading Japanese coin-op manufacturer, Konami has produced an *TMNT* arcade game, Nintendo NES cartridge and a special one-off hand-held LCD game. Versions of *TMNT* are also available for the C64, Amiga and PC. No one in this country is admitting to owning a UK *TMNT* licence – though time will tell, especially if *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* get big over here...



Buy the way, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* live in the sewers (yuk!)

MAG SCROLLS – LIKE A VIRGIN

Magnetic Scrolls, the UK's premier adventure writer, has signed by with Virgin/Mastertronic and is promising the debut of a new-style adventure game in mid-June on ST, Amiga, PC and Archimedes.

Magnetic Scrolls (Anita Sinclair) and Virgin/Mastertronic (Nick Alexander) founders celebrate their new deal

Details are very scarce at present, but David Bishop – Product Manager at Virgin/Mastertronic – told ACE: "Magnetic Scrolls has upgraded its interface... the days of the pure text adventure are over, you have to offer the user a lot more these days". Mag Scrolls was set up in 1984 by Anita Sinclair and Ken Gordon producing programs for the ill-fated Sinclair QL. Fortunately it ditched the Sinclair dodo and produced its first successful hit on the ST in late '85. *The Pawn* combined a powerful text parser with tasty location graphics. The release of *The Pawn* on every conceivable format – including the Mac and PCW, thanks to the use of a VAX Mini to develop the games – confirmed the award-winning Mag Scrolls as the leading adventure creator. Despite being quiet of late, adventure players must surely be looking forward to its next release.

BRAVE NEW YEAR

Now that you've made your New Year Resolutions (put that *Tetris* cartridge away, Gary), perhaps you'd like to hear a few of ours. The serious ones...

ACE is going to be introducing some important additions and alterations to its already hallowed pages next month. As we went to press we were busy celebrating the award of Magazine of the Year to our sister magazine The One – and secretly plotting how we could get it back from the next year!

The upshot of all this is that we have, after a lot of consideration, decided to introduce some new pages in the magazine. They'll be there for the first time in the next issue, and we're sure you'll welcome them. We're not giving too much away, but we know you'll be pleasantly suprised.

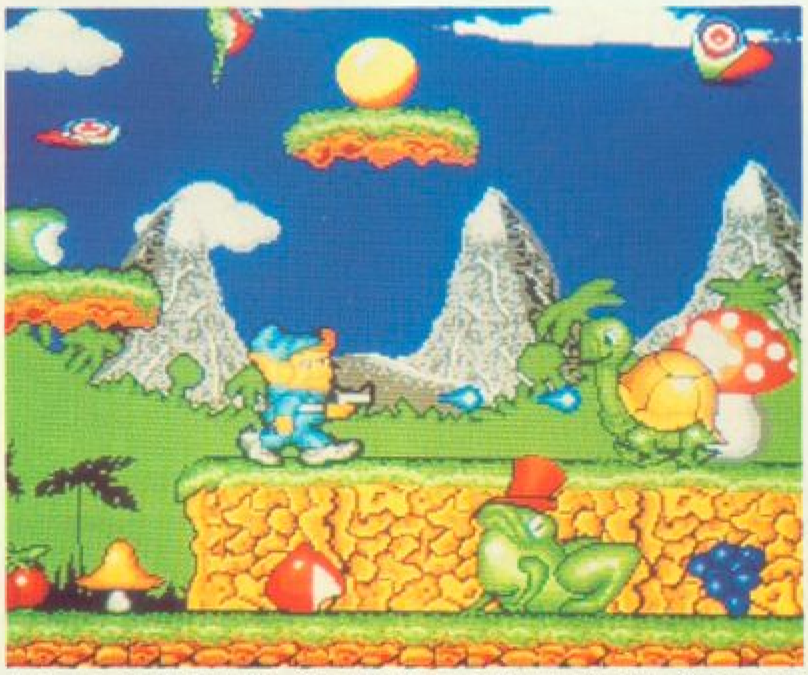
On other, equally serious matters, we've decided to make 1990 the year ACE really comes into its own as a campaigner for computer gaming in the world at large. During 1990 we'll be running a series of ACE Conferences to promote contact between readers and software houses, and at the same time we'll be organising conferences with the world at large to tell them about computer entertainment and the implications it has for the future of leisure technology.

This means two things. First, as an ACE reader, you'll be able to take part. Attendance at conferences will be free to subscribers and readers will pay only a nominal charge. It also means that as an ACE reader you can be proud to be seen reading the magazine. Don't miss next month's issue.

A-HA: NORWEGIAN SOFTWARE!

Newline Software, a new software company set up in August '88, is claiming to be the first 16-bit software house in Norway. The team is made up of 13 members, including programmers, graphic artists and musicians.

Newline join a growing band of Scandinavian programming teams. First off was the Danish *Swords of Sodan*, and since then an army of Viking Amiga programmers have been descending onTheir first game, *Aladdin's Magic Lamp* was released on the Amiga last month for £9.99dk.



"Like a fresh breath, like Newline Software," says the press release!

Newline has another two games due for release in early 1990: *Wonderland* for the ST, Amiga and *Plexu, The Time Traveller* for the ST, Amiga and PC.

ACE ON THE AUTOBAHN

ACE VISITS A BUNCH OF COOL CODE CRUISERS IN WEST GERMANY

What do you get when a group of young ex-hackers decide to produce their own games? A software company with the expertise and potential to write a major blockbusting game...

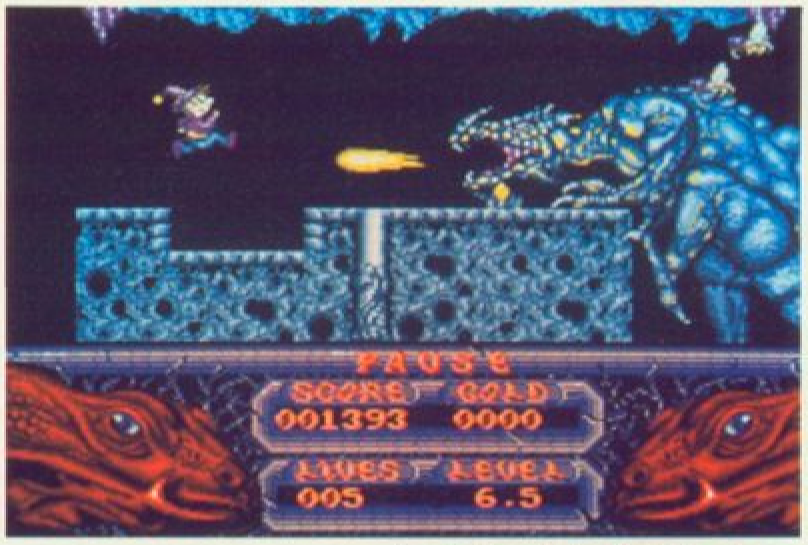
Thalion lines-up in Gütersloh's town centre: the team includes Holger Flöttmann (23), Erik Simon (25), Richard Karsmakers (22), Monika Krawinkel (24), Manuela Scholz (24) and Jochen Hippel (18). The dodgy looking geezer in the grey suit on the far left is Duncan "Arthur Daley" Lowthion from Grandslam – they handle Thalion products over in the UK

Thalion was set up in 1988, its origins are firmly rooted in the underground sub-culture of the games hacking and cracking circuit – it's oldest member is aged only 25. Thalion's co-founder, Erik Simon explained to ACE: "most of our programmers came from the hacking circuit, these ex-crackers are technically superb – but they find it more interesting to code rather than crack".

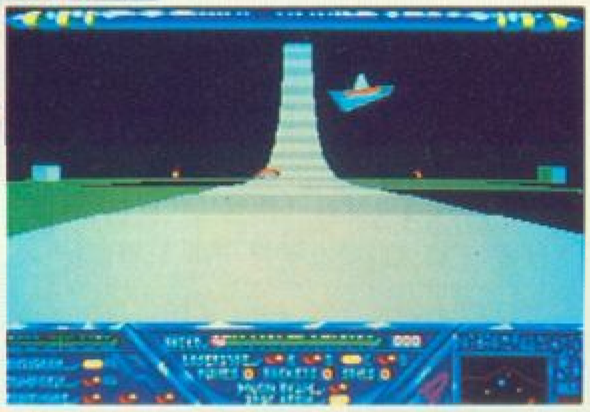
The company is based in Gütersloh, a picturesque – and perhaps slightly clichéd – German town approximately two hours drive from Düsseldorf airport. Everything you'd expect in a German town is here: the square complete with German brass band, market stalls selling warm wine and spicy sausages, and of course the obligatory tavern with portable kegs and beer served in a glass full of strawberries. It's little wonder that the Thalion team not only work together but also socialise in a local bar come programming think-tank, only a few minutes walk from their offices.

Getting its name from Tolkien's fantasy novel *Silmarillion*, it was perhaps fitting that Thalion choose to kick-off with a fantasy role-playing game. *Dragonflight* is an epic adventure which puts even the likes of *Ultima* and *Dungeon Master* to shame. Also on the release schedule is *Chambers of Shaolin* – a martial arts game featuring training sessions which are crucial to your in-game performance (available now on ST, Amiga with a PC version due later this year), *Seven Gates of Jambala* – platform'n'ladders uplifted by some neat end of level guardians (available now on ST, Amiga and C64), *Warp* – a multi-directional shoot'em-up (out soon on ST and Amiga), *Leavin' Teramis* – vertically-scrolling *Crackdown*-type shoot'em-up (out soon on ST, Amiga with a C64 version to follow shortly after), and *No Second Prize* – possibly Thalion's most exciting release thanks to its revolutionary fast solid 3D graphics. The guys have finished the routines and are now etching out a games design, and it should be out on ST, Amiga and PC in late Autumn.

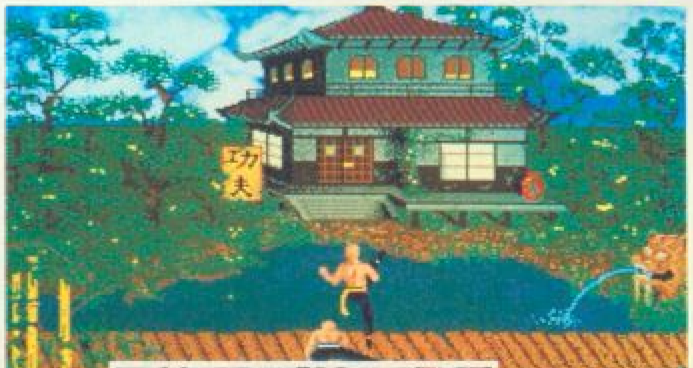
Thalion is made of an enthusiastic, likable and very technically competent group of dedicated games developers, ACE is sure you'll be hearing more of them over the coming year...



One of the end of level baddies from *Seven Gates of Jambala*. All Thalion games are developed on an ST using a combination of *GenST*, *Omnicron* and *K-Seka* assemblers – Atari's own *Neochrome* paint package is used to draw all the graphics. Thalion is currently in the process of developing its own set of utilities because, "we are not completely satisfied with any of these programs – you find all kind of funny errors and bugs"

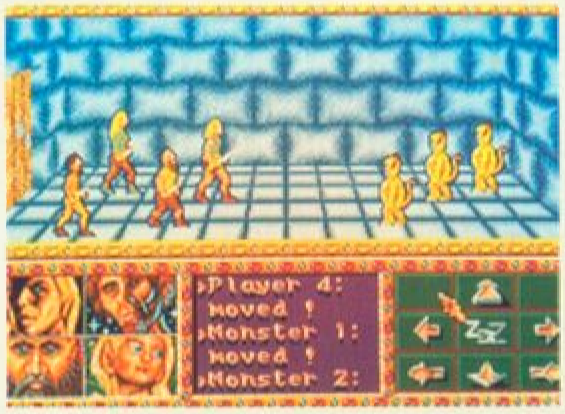


No Second Prize: potentially Thalion's greatest game, its Swiss programmer Christian Jungen has tweaked the 3D filled-vector routines to an astounding full screen display rate of 40

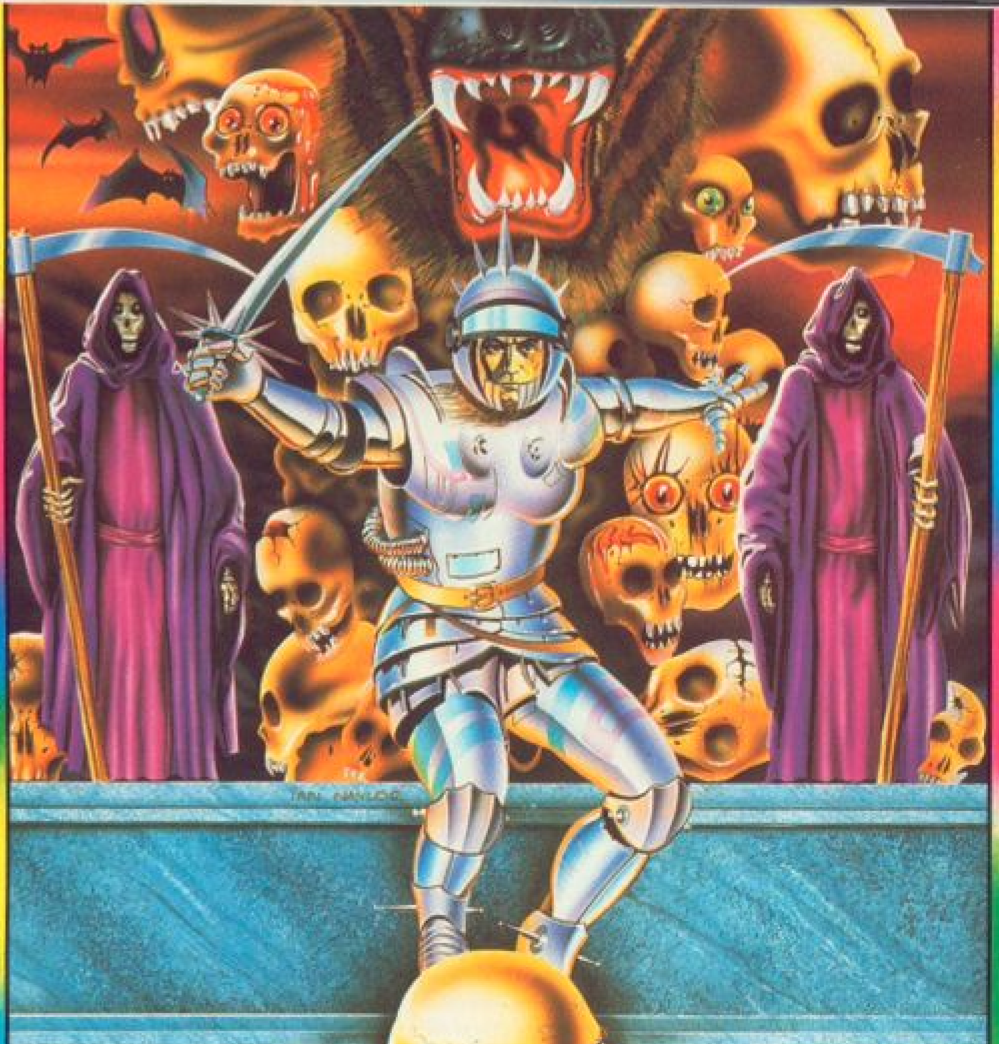


ST *Chambers of Shaolin* has maybe the best sound quality heard on any ST game to date thanks to crisp sound samples without any background noise. It also contains the scrolly-logo effects first seen in Sodan's infamous

Jochen Hippel is an amazing sound programmer who recreates C64 and Amiga demo and games music/sound-effects just for the fun of it! This crazy muso-magician knocked out a classic Rob Hubbard C64 tune in a matter of minutes – using only his custom-designed sound editor software. The speed at which he punched in those hex digits was very impressive, as was the faultless soundtrack



Dragonflight: most of the Thalion team are role-playing nutters, after all the company gets its name from a Tolkien novel...



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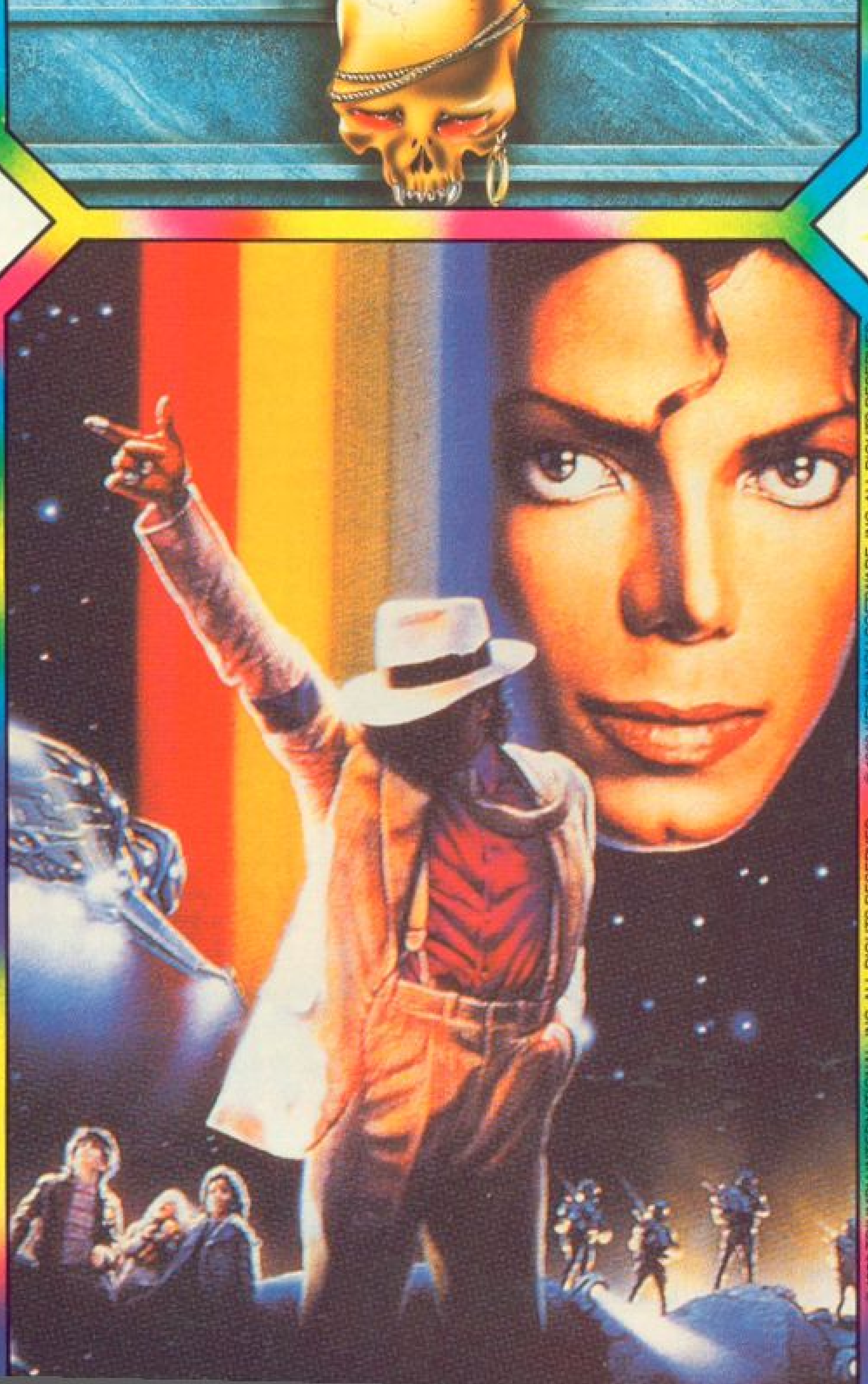

MICHAEL JACKSON™

MOONWALKER™

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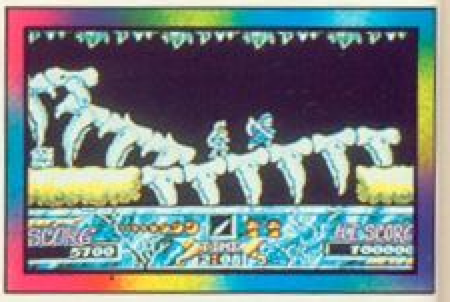

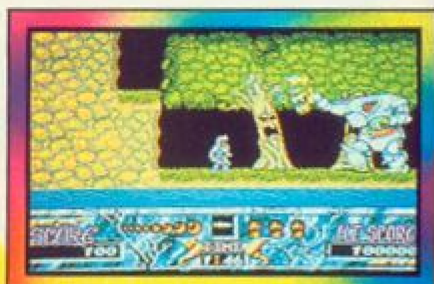

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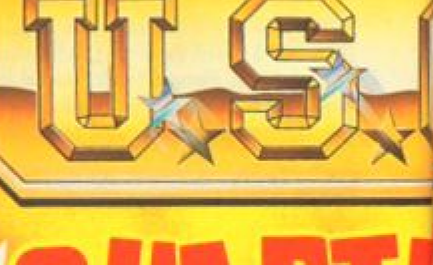

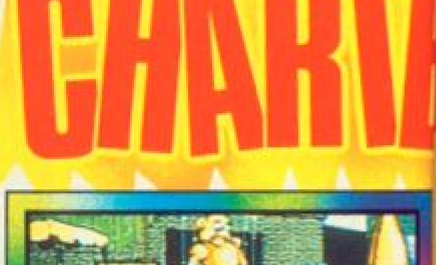

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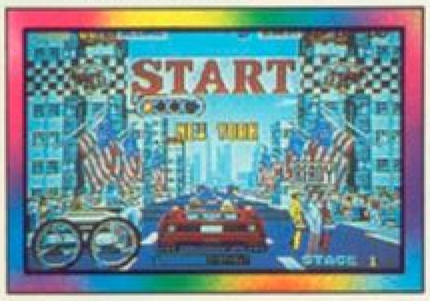
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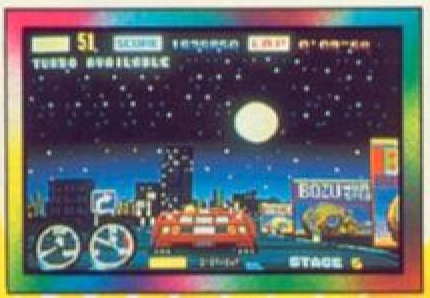
STAGE 1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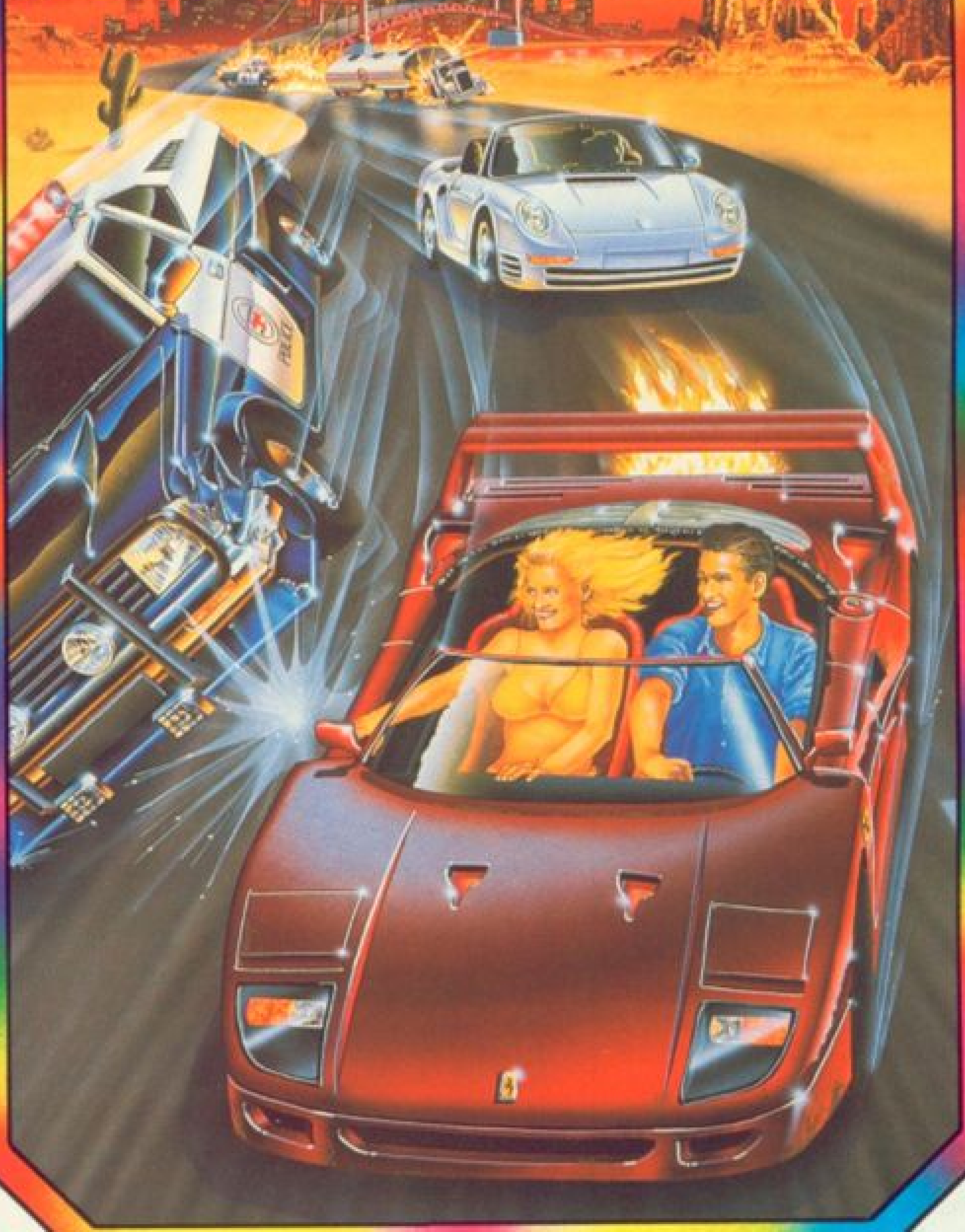

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SCREENSHOTS
TAKEN FROM VARIOUS SYSTEMS

ACE LETTERS

While our illustrious Editor recovers from the turmoils of a holiday in Jamaica (don't you feel sorry for him?), he's foolishly let Rik 'Hitman' Haynes loose on the LETTERS pages this month...

PRIZE LETTER

HELP AT HAND

I would be delighted to render my services to all Amiga, Spectrum and C64 owners that read ACE. I have a team of friends ready to answer letters via your Helpline in The Pink Pages. So please could you print the following:

Never fear we are here, we are ready to answer all letters from people needing help on the C64, Amiga and Spectrum. I have a team ready and waiting to answer your letters and then dispatch replies within 24 hours! We have the complete solutions to *Mercenary*, maps for *Batman*, tips for *Batman the Movie*, *Robocop* maps, *Bards Tale II* tips, *Populous* codes, *Carrier Command* tips, *Starglider* addicts and loads more games solutions. We will also do our best with utilities, etc. Send a large SAE to 38 Westover Road, Dawnley, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP135HY. But please no telephoning, we are going to be knee deep in tips as it is!

Also please send any Public Domain programs or *UMS* scenarios, as we have some too! If you've got any tips send them in, or just any letters. Well that's the end, thanks for a great mag at the best price.

Stephen Dickinson (plus Neil, Lee and Justin), High Wycombe, Bucks

• *In the next issue of ACE we're introducing a revolutionary new way to* ***Tame the Game*** *– in addition to our Tricks 'n' Tactics section. In the meantime, good luck with the tips service guys, it's nice to see some of our readers taking time out to help other gamesters. We hope you find the £25 useful.*

A PLEA FOR NICARAGUA

My mother is getting me either an Amiga or a Konix console. It's a toss-up to which one's better – the Konix is technically, but the Amiga has a secured future. Anyway I'd like to ask some questions about both of them. First the Amiga, what audio ports does it have? Are they the standard 3.5mm jacks? To what extent is the Amiga PC compatible? Can it just read PC disks or run MS-DOS programs? If it can run programs, would it be able to display CGA, EGA or VGA graphics? How fast would it run compared with a normal PC? Now the Konix, will ACE be reviewing Konix games? I put my name down (well my mum did) for a Konix on Harrods and Selfridges lists. If they are ready before 25th December, I get one. What about its stereo ports? If it has one jack it's fine for my Walkman 'phones, but not for my stereo system (it needs right and left phone sockets).

I think ACE is cool and has a very good mature layout (unlike other magazines). It's also got a dead good cover (nondestructive) and sensible reviews, although I think it should have two reviewers comments.

PS Nicaragua must Survive.

John Wood, Glasgow

• *Pencil and paper at the ready? Here we go: (1) left and right stereo jacks (2) yes (3, 4, 5) yes, if you buy a bridgeboard hardware add-on costing mega-dosh (5) everything but VGA (6) not very fast I'm afraid (7) yes, as soon as they're generally available (8) the Konix has a standard single 3.5mm Walkman-type headphone socket.*

Thanks for the comments, we on ACE try to stay at a level 0°C until the final deadlines hit us – then its 450°F all the way! Everybody on ACE takes a butchers at all the games we review – if anybody radically disagrees with the reviewer's opinions on a game we give them space to air their own views.

PS Of course Nicaragua must survive – along with the NHS, child benefit and student grants (little bit of politics, my name's Rik Haynes, thank you and goodnight).

TAKE TO THE SKIES

I have just read your review of *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain* flight-simulator from Lucasfilm (ACE 28, page 39), and very interesting it was too. I especially liked the little sections on the pilots and leaders, and the technical snippets on the two main aircraft involved. But your information on the Spitfire was flawed. You stated that it was the only fighter to maintain it's superiority for the whole duration. In fact even in its final and most advanced form it was still outclassed by a handful of fighters, the Messerschmitt 262, Fokkerwulf 190 Long Nose and the British Meteor to name but a few. So please don't print things without checking out the facts first.

J. Roe, Ingleton, North Yorks

• *Humble apologies biggles, though I think you've misunderstood us: we meant the Spitfire was the only fighter to maintain its superiority during the war in its class, i.e. single prop fighter – not turbo nutter proto-jets as you've sited in your examples. But then again what should I know, I was born thirty years after these dinosaurs flew over Britain. Anyway, we're glad you enjoyed the review, look out for more articles of this type in future issues of ACE...*

IT'S A BIND!

Please can you inform me of the following:

(1) Whether ACE binders are still available?

(2) If they are, how much are they?

(3) If they are not available yet, when will they be available, and how much will they be?

I enclose a SAE for your answers, and would greatly appreciate a prompt reply.

Andrew Brogan, Banstead, Surrey

• *Sorry Andrew, although we'd love to answer all your letters individually, we just haven't got the time – unless you want to read the next issue of ACE in three months time! As for ACE binders, I'm afraid our marketing department has run out of the readies (someone had to pay for the ACE Christmas Lunch!), but expect to see something come the new financial year in April.*

ARCHIE AWARENESS

Your review of *Interdictor* (ACE 28, page 84) was unfair and biased, you gave *Interdictor* 650 altogether. This is totally unsatisfactory, *Interdictor* is one of the best flight simulators available on the market – there is only one flight-simulator which I would rate as being better than *Interdictor* and that is *F-29 Retaliator*. The screen shot you showed with the review of *Interdictor* was very suspect, I have seen *Interdictor* being played in real life and the cockpit does not look at all like the picture you showed.

Your magazine hardly reviews games for the Archimedes and when you do review an Archie game you never spend time playing the game properly. There should be a section in your magazine for the Acorn Electron, BBC series and Archie series. You use as much space reviewing PC

GHOSTBUSTERS 2 CONTROVERSY

After five years in the games writing business from *Kayleth* through *ISS* (a game which you ACE Rated and feature in your Pink Pages each month but sold Didderlysqat!) We have learn't to be tolerant of all reviews good and bad.

We realise and accept that an opinion of a game is a very personal view. It can be hard on occasion when a project such as *Ghostbusters II* – written in six months from the script without benefit of the film, which was still in production when we set to work – is thrashed so soundly, but there you go!

However we feel we would like to point out a few inaccuracies to your review.

The Amiga version runs on two disks, not three as stated. Perhaps your reviewer – not up with the programming side – has difficulty with this. So as a guide line: two is generally identified in the following manner – hold a disk in each hand. If there are no disks left in the box then you have two disks to play with! Easy.

The ST runs on four single-sided disks, we could have produced two double-sided disks but this would not have been helpful to those owners of a single-sided drive. But one can't assume that a reviewer would see this difficulty.

We also wonder about the comment that "The Sound is very impressive sampled stuff – the *Ghostbusters* theme" and yet rates 0 in the rating box. Perhaps this discrepancy is indicative of the review or perhaps it isn't, who knows?

May all of the team at Foursfield take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year. No doubt we will meet again in the review columns of 1990!

A note to Gary, who I am led to believe actually wrote the review. My real name appears at the bottom of this letter and in the spirit of free speech I would assume you will print this letter in full. If one is confident that one is speaking the truth, one does not need to adopt an alias.

Anna Ufnowska,
Foursfield (programers of *Ghostbusters 2*)

• *The version of* Ghostbusters 2 *that we were sent consisted of three disks. We can only conclude that it was not a production copy. See the Blitter End this month for the correct Audio Rating – mistakes do sometimes happen and if they do, we will always rectify them at the earliest possible opportunity.*

As for our review of Ghostbusters 2 *or any game, we always stand-by what we write. If anybody agrees or disagrees with what we say, we always welcome their comments and opinions. We do, however, agree with you on the subject of pseudonyms. These will not be used again in this magazine under any circumstances.*

Well it looks like ACE has got itself in a spot of bother. Reading an article in the computer press, Activision are apparently furious with ACE's review of *Ghostbusters 2*, which is understandable. But to be quite honest, the game's really not very good. And you were right to rate it as 251. I really think that game companies who don't like the rating a magazine gives, then they should shut-up and not start getting petty. It certainly puts attention on the game with a terrible rating, giving non-ACE buyers (are there any? – Dep. Ed) the ACE Verdict, and that should definitely make an impression of the sales of the game. What happened to free speech? I doubt that Activision will win on this matter and I personally congratulate the reviewer for giving a true opinion.

On a slightly lighter note, why the price of £1.60 on the January issue? Don't start putting prices up... magazines are dear enough already! By the way, the ACE Stockmarket is a great idea.

Neil Carr, Doncaster, S.Yorks

• *We're glad you like the ACE Stockmarket – we've had a great response from industry and public alike. As for the 10p price increase, we believe ACE is tremendous value for money, but then we would! But that extra 10p is buying you a multitude of new features to be introduced into ACE over the next three months (see pages 8 and 120 for further details)...*

Engine and Sega Megadrive games. There are thousands of people with Electron's, BBC's and Archimedes'. Now tell me who many people have a PC Engine or a Sega Megadrive.

Sandy Ladette (we think!), Walthamstow, London

• *Although no official figures are available, there are at least three million PC Engine and Sega Megadrive owners in the world – and that figure is growing at a phenomenal rate. The range of games released on these consoles is staggering, and they are always entertaining and expertly programmed. Can the same be said for games on the Acorn Electron, BBC or Archimedes? Now don't get us wrong, we like these machines and try to cover all their exciting and interesting developments, but if we start giving the Electron special coverage shouldn't we then give as much space over to the Commodore C16/+4, Dragon 32 or MSX? Not that we're belittling these machines either. If there's a sensational development in Advanced Computer Entertainment then we will cover it – for whatever machine, one-bit micro to NASA mainframe inclusive.*

As for the Interdictor *review, we commissioned a seasoned Archie gamester to review this game and we stand by his comments – don't forget peoples tastes and opinions do vary. ACE always spends time on each game – no matter how good or bad it is. But your quite right, we did make a pigs-ear of the screen-shot, in fact we gave you a sneak peek at Activision's new gaming epic,* David Wolf: Secret Agent *(see page 18 for further info).*

TOP TEN ADVERTS

Here's my Top Ten Adverts for games. I looked for colour, style and generally being able to read it.

(1) Populous	Electronic Arts 97%
(2) Test Drive 2	Accolade 96%
(3) Batman	Ocean 95%
(4) Operation Thunderbolt	Ocean 95%
(5) Thunderbirds	Grandslam 94%
(6) Dan Dare 2	Virgin 92%
(7) The Untouchables	Ocean 91%
(8) Chase HQ	Ocean 90%
(9) Ghostbusters 2	Activision 89%
(10) Robocop	Ocean 89%

No name supplied, Newquay, Cornwall

• *Do you agree with these choices? If not, send in your own lists.*

NOT ENOUGH PORNOGRAPHY?

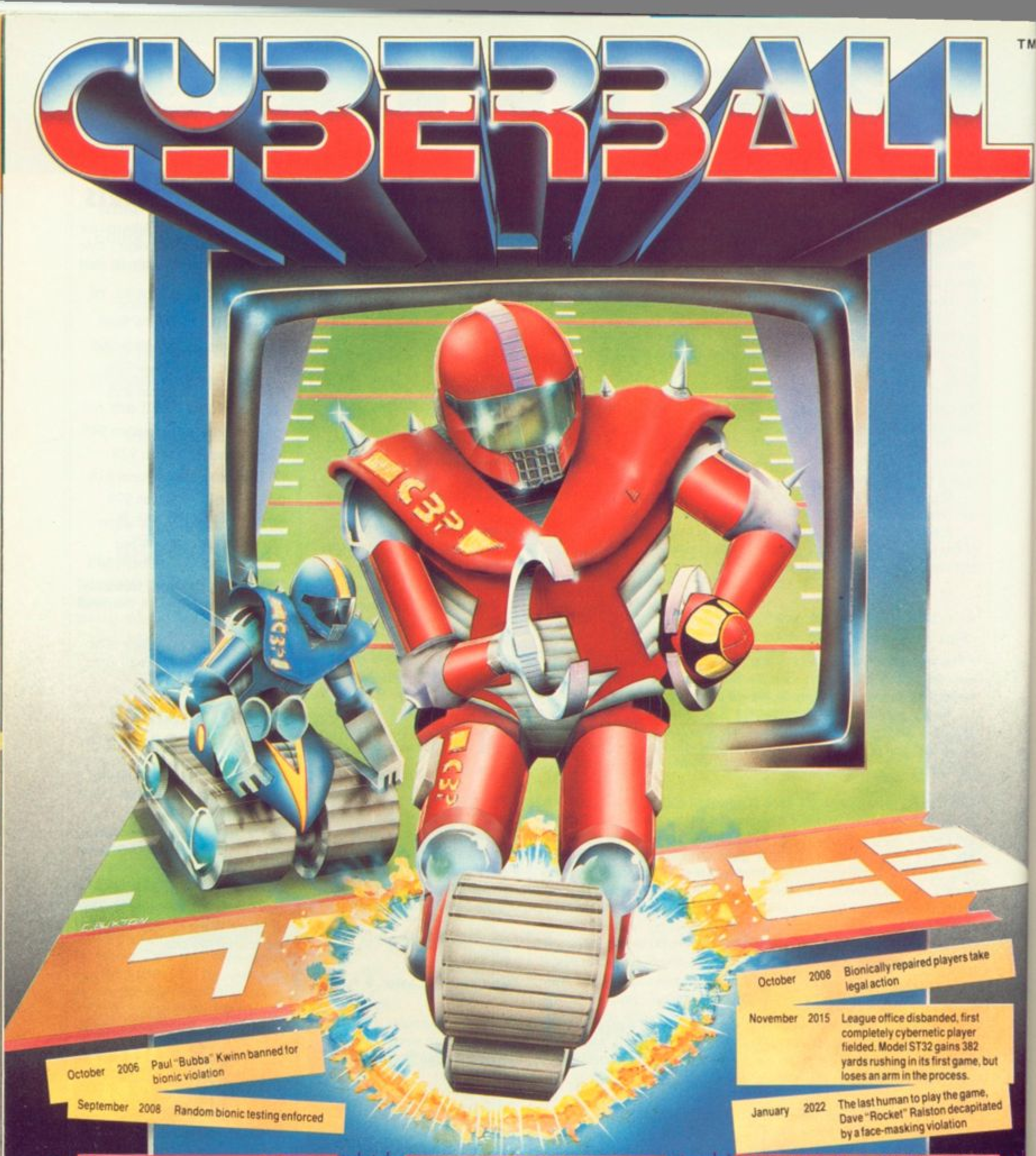
Sack everybody on ACE, employ a load of photographers and turn it into a porn mag.

Lee Barrass, Doncaster, S.Yorks

• *Er, well I don't really think so – although our Advertising Manager, Gary Williams, may disagree with me on this one.*

YOU COULD WIN £25!

Are you **overjoyed** or **underwhelmed** with your latest games purchase? What do you think should be done about software piracy, the price of games software or the next generation of computer entertainment hardware? Tell us **YOUR** views on any subject connected with Advanced Computer Entertainment and you could **WIN** yourself a prize of **£25**! What are you waiting for? Get writing to: **ACE LETTERS, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.**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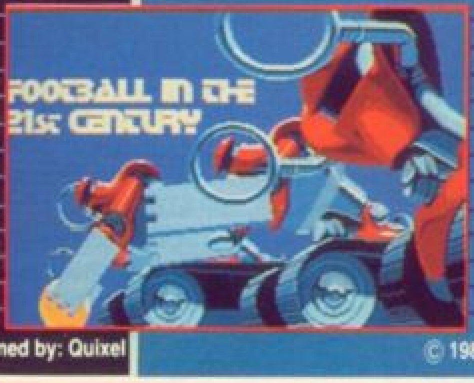
October 2006 Paul "Bubba" Kwinn banned for bionic violation

September 2008 Random bionic testing enforced

October 2008 Bionically repaired players take legal action

November 2015 League office disbanded, first completely cybernetic player fielded. Model ST32 gains 382 yards rushing in its first game, but loses an arm in the process.

January 2022 The last human to play the game, Dave "Rocket" Ralston decapitated by a face-masking violation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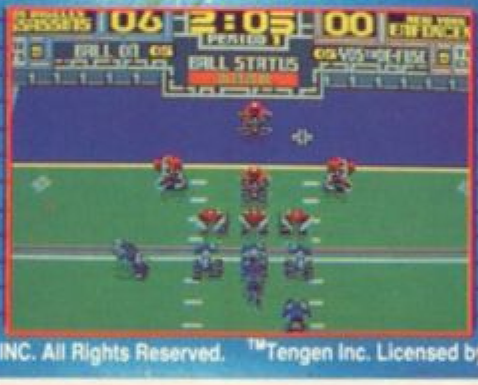
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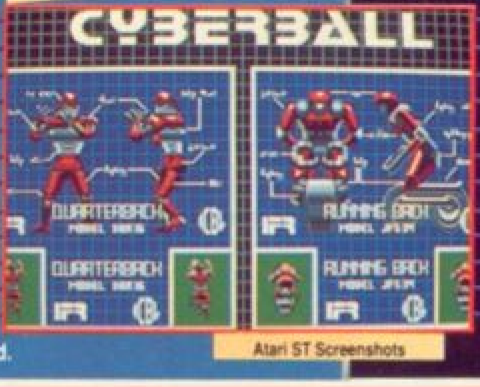
CYBERBALL
QUARTERBACK
QUARTERBACK
RUNNING BACK
RUNNING BACK

Atari ST Screenshots

Programmed by: Quixel

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THE ACE STOCK MARKET

NEWS OF BIGGER AND BETTER PRIZES THIS MONTH, PLUS THE FIRST WINNERS. THE ACE STOCKMARKET NOT ONLY GIVES YOU THE CHANCE TO WIN, IT ALSO TELLS YOU WHICH GAMES THE REVIEWERS IN *ALL* MAGAZINES ARE FAVOURING WITH HIGH MARKS – AND THEREFORE WHICH GAMES TO GO FOR WITH CONFIDENCE.

As more and more people are getting into the Stockmarket, we've decided to introduce some improvements from next month. First, we're going to give away MORE prizes! Secondly, we've decided to make some changes to the way the Company Counter is run.

Up till now, we've only printed the ratings for companies who have had products reviewed during the current month. However, the system includes a 'devaluation system' that reduces the share prices over a period of time for companies who don't publish any games. It would obviously be good, therefore, to see as many companies quoted as possible, so from next month we'll be printing ALL share prices regularly.

That's not all, however. We will also be introducing a Software Index, which will affect the way companies are rated. We believe it will make the charts even more authoritative. You can find out all about it next month.

THE WINNERS!

Cor blimey! What a helpless lot you are. Not ONE person got ANY of the listings completely correct. However, since the whole idea is to actually GIVE some of these prizes away, we thought we'd make a couple of changes to the prize giving system.

From now on, we'll give the prizes not to those who predict ALL the entries in a category, but to those who get the *most right.* So, for example, you could win a prize if you predict only the first two in a category, if that's the entry closest to a completely correct list. In the event of draws, we'll put all the correct entries in a hat and draw out a winner.

But not only that. We've also decided to introduce a JACKPOT. This means that if anyone DOES manage to predict all five entries in any category correctly, we'll give them a whopping jackpot prize of £150 worth of software! Yay! The jackpot scheme will start this month with Round 3, so get your entries in now!

As a result of the new prize regulations, therefore, we have three winners this month: Dean Walker of Peterlee was one of several contestants who correctly predicted that *F16 Combat Pilot* would top the Amiga charts (no-one got the second entry right – *Rock'n'Roll* – though Dean had it in at number 5). Dean Smith of Bushey Heath was one of several who got entries one and two in the ST chart, and John Horncastle was one of many selected at random who pinpointed *Batman* at number one in the Amstrad charts. There were no correct qualifying entries for the other sections.

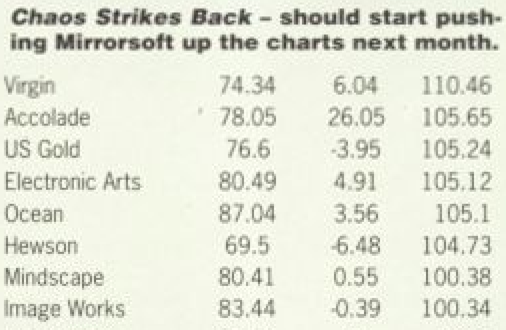
THE COMPANY COUNTER

There are three columns of ratings for companies in the ACE Stock Market. The first shows the overall score for this month only, statistically calculated from hundreds of reviews in magazines during the current month. The second shows the amount of change – up or down – from the previous month. The third is the share price: the company's rating relative to its past performance. This month, Delphine is holding on to its top slot despite a slight drop in form, while Anco and Accolade have seen their fortunes rise sharply with their latest releases.

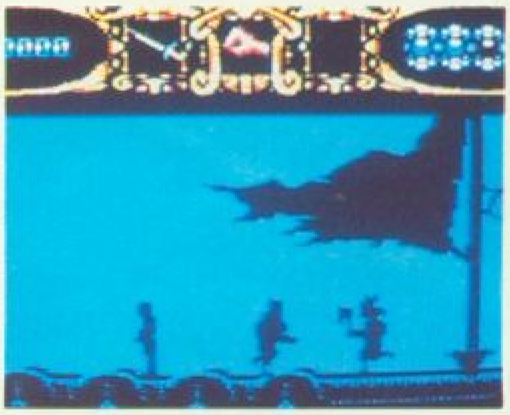
Important! In line with other improvements we're making to the magazine (see page 8), we shall be introducing a new element to the company section next month: the Software Index. This will also have the effect of altering the way in which companies share prices will be presented, so we thought it best to suspend 'share dealings' (i.e. Company Counter forecast entries from readers) this month. Every back to normal, and better, next month. And of course you can still try your luck on the other counters.

Publisher	This mth	+ or -	Rating
Delphine/Palace	85.25	-3.5	164.49
Anco	72.79	31.12	131.12
Gremlin	75.23	1.85	120.97
Dinamic	63.88	13.47	113.47
System 3	82.75	2.33	112.49
Virgin	74.34	6.04	110.46
Accolade	78.05	26.05	105.65
US Gold	76.6	-3.95	105.24
Electronic Arts	80.49	4.91	105.12
Ocean	87.04	3.56	105.1
Hewson	69.5	-6.48	104.73
Mindscape	80.41	0.55	100.38
Image Works	83.44	-0.39	100.34
Cinemaware	91.88	n/a	100*
Edge	66.75	n/a	100*
Smash 16	80	n/a	100*
Firebird	75.66	11.33	99.74
Domark	71.67	-6.1	99.11
Microprose	82.83	7.43	98.36
Activision	70.47	-3.43	96.31
Elite	69.77	4.01	95.48
Impressions	41.75	-4.75	95.25
Level 9	82.29	-5.34	94.66
Rainbow Arts	68.65	-5.5	94.5
Psygnosis	71.33	-5.17	94.4
Infogrames	73.97	12.87	94.11
Micro Style	74.12	3.76	93.77
Logotron	69.2	-7.8	92.2
Blade	79.67	-9.66	90.34
Kixx	57	-14.3	89.59
SSI/US Gold	63.83	-12.67	87.74
Thalamus	84.44	-12.56	87.44
UbiSoft	64.55	-13.45	86.1
Rainbird	81.56	-16.69	83.31
Encore	47.31	-13.55	83.25
CDS	63.47	15.67	79.29
Players Premier	41.67	-31.58	79.12
Hit Squad	65.25	-2.92	76.58
Alternative	48	-19	68.01
16-Blitz	38	-38.67	57.37

Entries marked * are new this month.



Chaos Strikes Back **– should start pushing Mirrorsoft up the charts next month.**



Myth **– doing wonders for System 3 in the 8-bit charts.**

THE MACHINE COUNTER

AMIGA

F29 Retaliator	Ocean	95.6
Sim City	Infogrames	94.29
It Came from the Desert	Cinemaware	91.88
Stunt Car Racer	Micro Style	91.75
Switchblade	Gremlin	87.85

Ocean's move towards 'meatier' games has got off to an excellent start, with *F29 Retaliator* gaining awards all over the place.

COMMODORE 64

Myth	System 3	93.13
Hypersports	Hit Squad	88.25
Turbo Outrun	US Gold	87.3
Power Drift	Activision	87.23
Wicked	Activision	86.25

Myth takes over the top slot as *Turbo OutRun* slips, and *Power Drift* continues to score highly.

AMSTRAD CPC

Ghostbusters II	Activision	86
Dynamite Dux	Activision	84.5
Ghouls'n'Ghosts	US Gold	81
Star Wars Trilogy	Domark	75
Sporting Triangles	CDS	75

Ghostbusters II goes straight in at number one while *Dynamite Dux* is still holding its own.

PC-COMPATIBLE

Carrier Command	Rainbird	99.13
Space Rogue	Origin	83.63
Cycles	Accolade	81.77

Only a top three this time, in a lean month for PC releases. *Carrier Command* looks even more like a 'must buy' than ever, and Origin seems to be keeping up to its high standards with its latest release. Come on everyone, let's have more PC games! With EGA and even VGA catching on, there's no excuse not to.

SPECTRUM

Myth	System 3	95
Chase HQ	Ocean	93.5
Hard Drivin'	Domark	90.7
Operation Thunderbolt	Ocean	88.75
Ghouls'n'Ghosts	US Gold	87.17

Myth continues to get a thumbs-up from everyone, but the impact of the driving games is beginning to be felt as *Chase HQ* and *Hard Drivin'* motor in at over 90 per cent.

ATARI ST

Hard Drivin'	Domark	90.37
Ninja Warriors	Virgin	87
Ghouls'n'Ghosts	US Gold	86.19
Interphase	Image Works	85.8
Super Wonder Boy	Activision	85.67

Hard Drivin' lives up to the hype, while ST is definitely the best format for Ninja Warriors so far.

THE 16-BIT COUNTER

Ninja Warriors and *Indiana Jones*, bubbling under last month, make it into the 16-bit Top Ten. Amiga games are scoring consistently higher than those on the ST, and it's the strength of the Amiga versions which is filling up the top three places.

F29 Retaliator	Ocean		94.8
Sim City	Infogrames	ST, Amiga	92.15
It Came from the Desert	Cinemaware	Amiga	91.88
Hard Drivin'	Domark	ST, Amiga	89.12
Ninja Warriors	Virgin	ST, Amiga	87.29
Keef the Thief	Electronic Arts	Amiga	87.25
Stunt Car Racer	Micro Style	ST, Amiga	86.25
Super Wonder Boy	Activision	ST	85.67
Indiana J/Last Crusade	US Gold	Amiga	85.5
Switchblade	Gremlin	ST, Amiga	85.35

Bubbling under: *Future Wars, Dragons of Flame, Ghouls'n'Ghosts*

THE 8-BIT COUNTER

Myth and *Hard Drivin'* swoop in to deny US Gold's Ghouls'n'Ghosts the top slot. However, although Ghouls has been around for a while, it could still feature in next month's chart as the Commodore version picks up more reviews.

Myth	System 3	Sp, C64	93.13
Hard Drivin'	Domark	Spectrum	90.7
Ghouls'n'Ghosts	US Gold	Sp, C64, CPC	86.44
Retrograde	Thalamus	C64	86
Operation Thunderbolt	Ocean	Sp, C64, CPC	85.83
Snare	Thalamus	C64	82.88
Stunt Car Racer	Micro Style	Sp, C64	81.5
Cabal	Ocean	Sp, C64	80.75
Turbo Outrun	US Gold	C64	79.6
Super Wonder Boy	Activision	Sp, C64	76.75

Bubbling under: *Double Dragon II,Toobin', Ghostbusters II.*

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ROUND THREE

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My prediction for next month's top five software houses on the Company Counter is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five game on the Commodore 64 is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Spectrum is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amstrad CPC is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Atari ST is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

My prediction for next month's top five games on the Amiga is:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Rules:

All entries must be received by the closing date for this round of 1st February 1990.

No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.

Only one entry per household.

The decision of the judges is final and correspondence cannot be entered into.

Chain Reaction
Storm Warrior
Sigma 7
Blue Thunder
1942
Combat Lynx
Spitfire 40
3DC
Saboteur!
Bomb Jack
World Championship Boxing
Scooby Doo
Paperboy
Ghosts 'n Goblins
Critical Mass
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Game	Format	Price	Release Date
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SPACE HARRIER	Spec. C64 Ams.	£2.99 £2.99 £2.99	22.12.89
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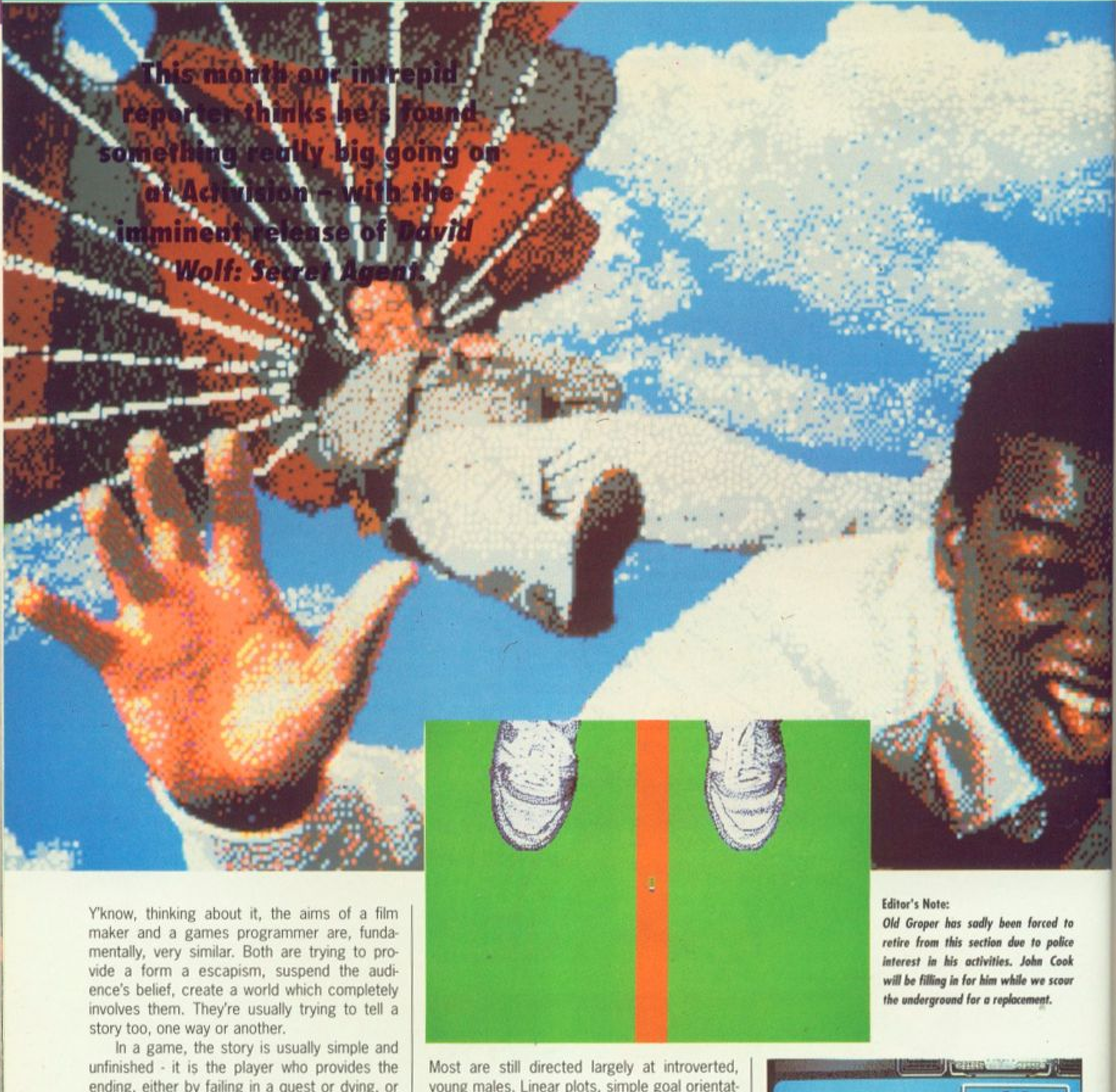
TOP SECRET

JOHN COOK GOES UNDERCOVER AT ACTIVISION...

This month our intrepid reporter thinks he's found something really big going on at Activision – with the imminent release of *David Wolf: Secret Agent.*



Y'know, thinking about it, the aims of a film maker and a games programmer are, fundamentally, very similar. Both are trying to provide a form a escapism, suspend the audience's belief, create a world which completely involves them. They're usually trying to tell a story too, one way or another.

In a game, the story is usually simple and unfinished - it is the player who provides the ending, either by failing in a quest or dying, or succeeding in a particular task. It is the uncertainly and challenge involved in this interaction that makes the computer game so compelling.

How come more people go to movies than play computer games then? Well, let's admit it - movies look a whole lot better than most computer games. Totally smooth animation, great resolution, almost infinite palate, great soundtrack. No competition with even the most expensive computer hardware.

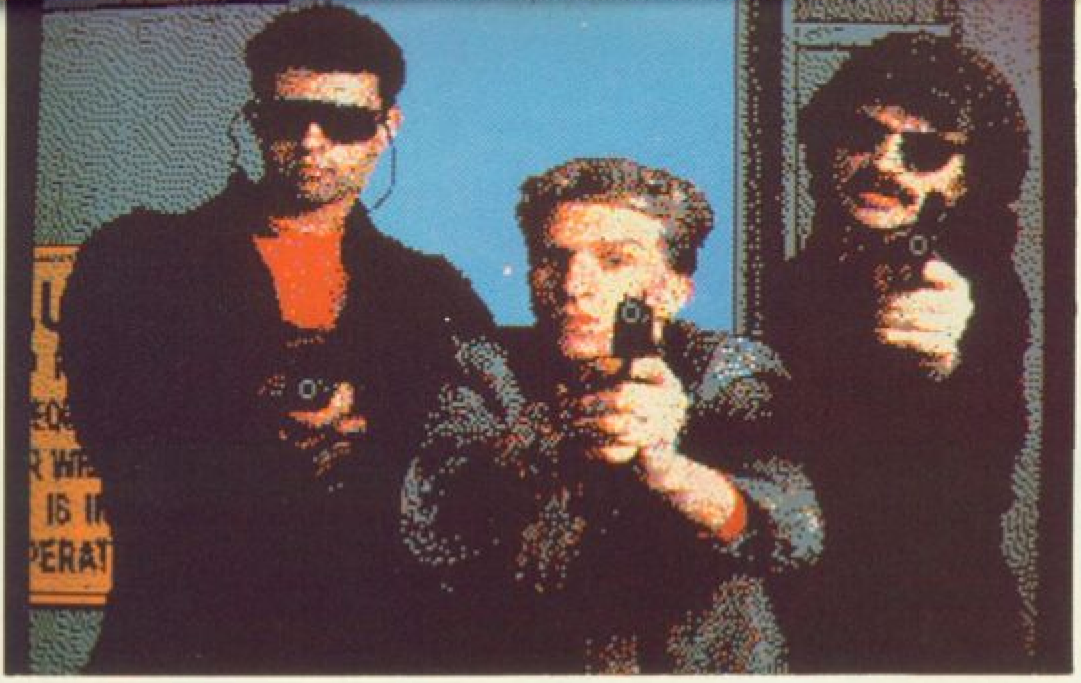
Subject matter too - there are films made on a variety of subjects while the lack of imagination involved in the basic concepts and design of most games is sorely lamentable. Most are still directed largely at introverted, young males. Linear plots, simple goal orientated action.

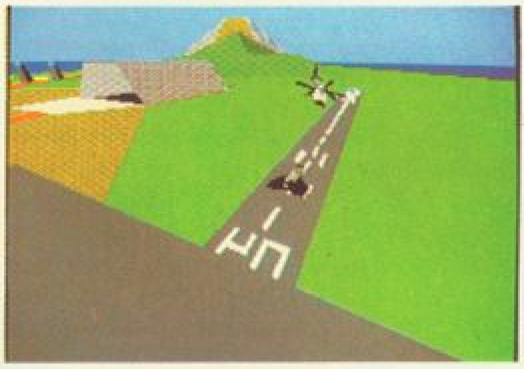
This too is a functional directive ordered by the hardware. Not enough memory, not enough processing power, not enough storage. In a few years time, naturally, this will all be different. And instead of writing games, our programmers will be making movies.

Here and now 'though, the present hardware limitations don't stop some people out there striving to overcome these limitations and close the gap between film and games.

First to come to the fore were Cinemaware - bringing cinematographic themes and using decorative animated scenes in its games. Nice work that sometimes falls down in its implementation, but at least there is striving towards a goal. But you can only go so far using sprite technology. Enter Dynamix.

Editor's Note:
Old Groper has sadly been forced to retire from this section due to police interest in his activities. John Cook will be filling in for him while we scour the underground for a replacement.





Dynamix, an American programming house, previously best known for Arctic Fox and more recently Abrams Battle Tank, have just finished a work using digitised stills for narrative and filled polygon techniques for action sequences, mixing sprites and 3-D techniques in a unique fashion. This game is called David Wolf: Secret Agent.

You control (some) of the actions of said hero, working for good guys Peregrine, in his set piece fight against the evil Bruno Vasto's Viper. The scam is this - Wolf ex-friend Garth Stock has defected to Viper taking with him some new super Stealth Fighter and it's sultry pouting designer, the spunky Kelly O'Neal. There are five set piece arcade sequences that determine the fate of Wolf and the World - as Viper are now blackmailing the US Government to the tune of $5 Billion.

You start off with a hang-glider sequence over the cliffs of Dover, then on to two car chases, a free fall game, which if you rip the chute off your adversary you go on to attempt to infiltrate the secret base by landing on a moving lorry. Once in the base, you have to capture the plane, then fly it to safety - avoiding heat seeking missiles by flying through an empty hanger in the meantime! Very James Bond.

The plot is completely linear, with the digitised scenes (complete with real actors expressing suitably ham emotions), but the humour of the thing is very much in the spirit of the genre. These digitised scenes would be novel enough, but the really original thing about David Wolf is the way the 3-D is used.

Not only is it often mixed with some sprites to produce a novel effect (like the swinging training shoes when you look down from the *parachute) but another, even more cinematic* device is used.

Within a 3-D graphics system, the view point of the player is just another object in the system. It's called the "Camera". The view of the Camera can be moved just as easily as any other object in the system. But for the first time, Dynamix use this 3-D "Camera" as - a film camera, using it to pan, zoom and sweep across certain set 3-D pieces - just like a real movie.

The effect is electrifying. For the first time the real feel of the movie has been captured by the programmer. The game itself can be reviewed by others. Some will love it. Some not. But the conceptual breakthrough has been made. Who cares if you need a hard disc and a fast PC? Dynamix have done it, let's hope everyone else can catch up. Fast!

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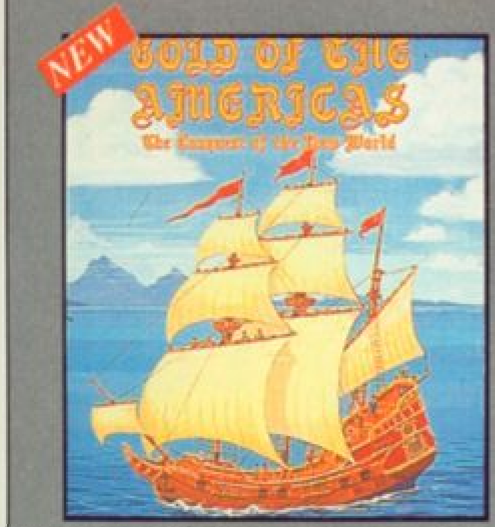

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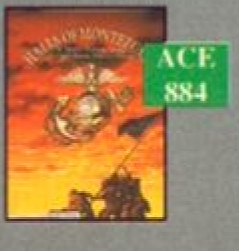

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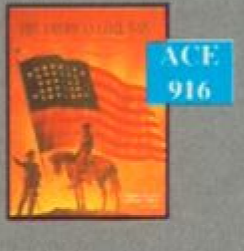

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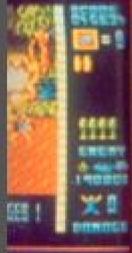

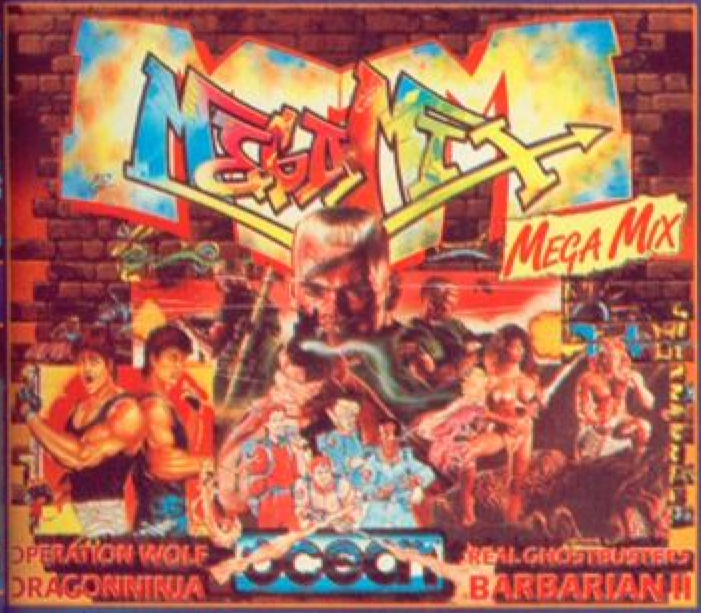

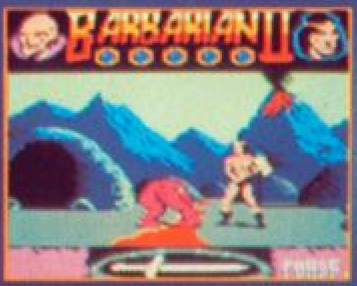

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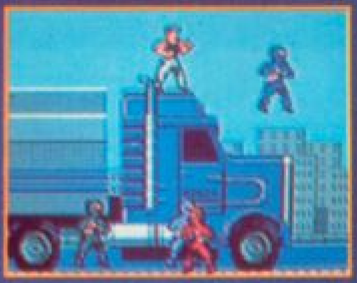

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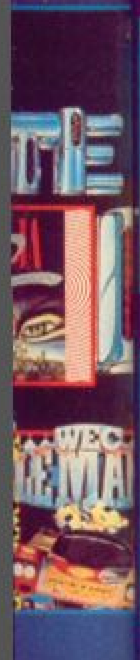

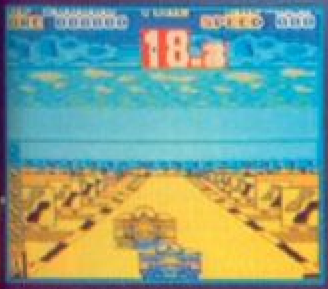

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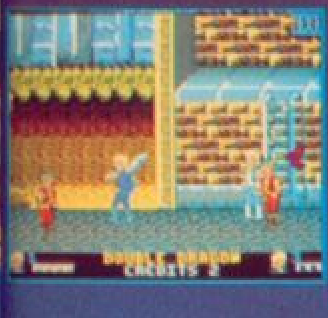

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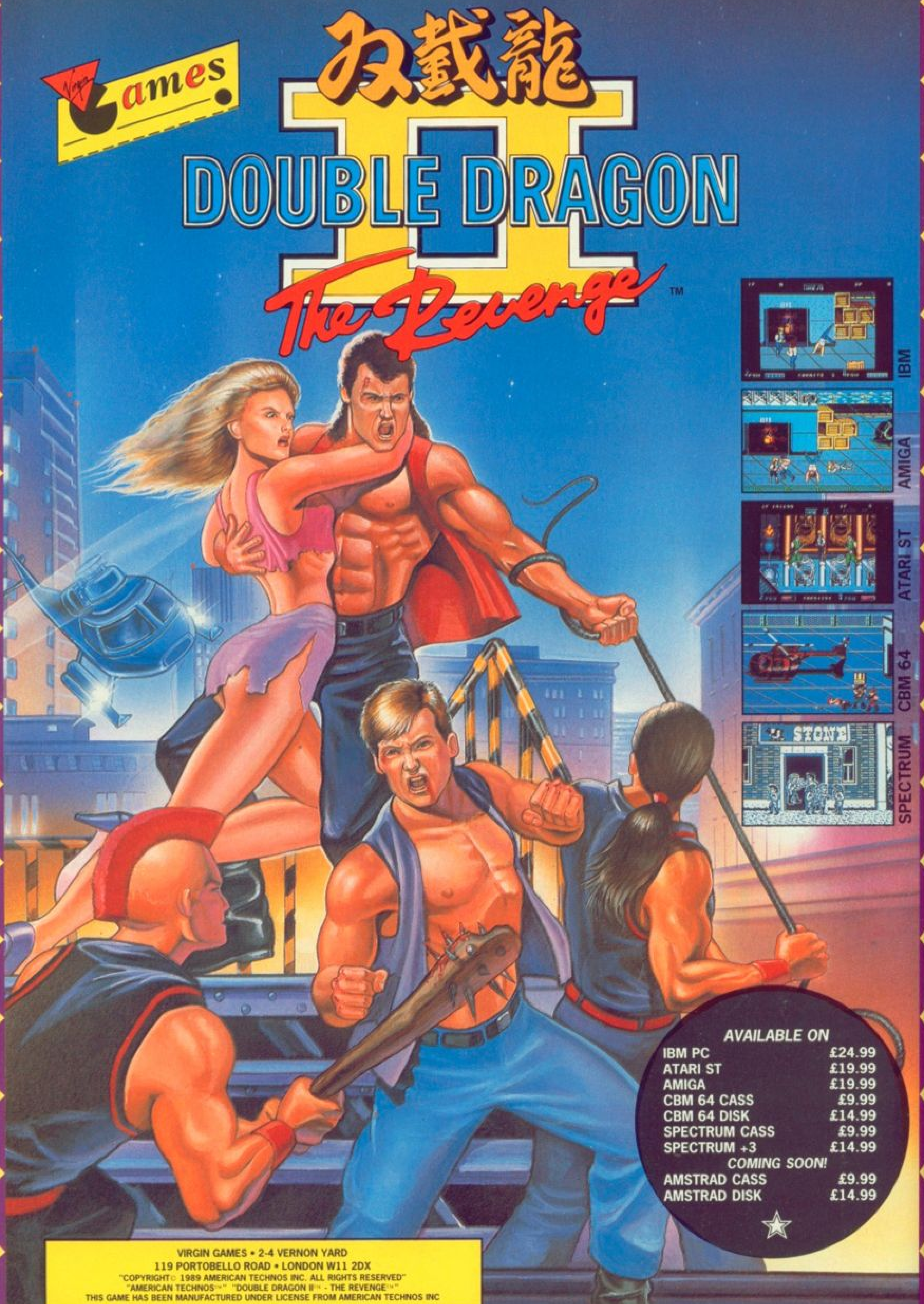

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CALIBRE 50

Seta Corp

I've never been a great fan of *Commando/Ikari Warriors* kind of games, but this one may well convert me - even 'though, in principle, I remain opposed to titles with this high a body count.

Yes, you control a soldier sprite with a machine gun and have to wade your way through solid masses of cannon fodder - but there's something in the thing that gives it an edge over most of its competitors.

Set in, yawn, Vietnam - with you out to liberate P.O.W's (or was that repatriated Boat People?) the scroll follows you about as you weave through the jungle. Ammunition is limited - with you collecting extra bullets from the people you kill. You also have grenades and can pick up really interesting hardware further in the game.

Yes, I know it sounds hackneyed, all I can say is that I started playing it sceptical and finished up - much later - in grudging admiration. Good technical implementation and great game balance pull this out of the mire and make it a must for the boys. But, as they say, check your ideological soundness in at the door.

0000000 0062000
1:LABYRINTH OF CAVES
The evil hand of BASHTAR has seized the lovely MIHO.
Her beloved, the mighty TOKI, has also been dealt a wicked blow. Now, reduced to a lowly ape, TOKI must risk a perilous journey to free MIHO and regain his manhood.
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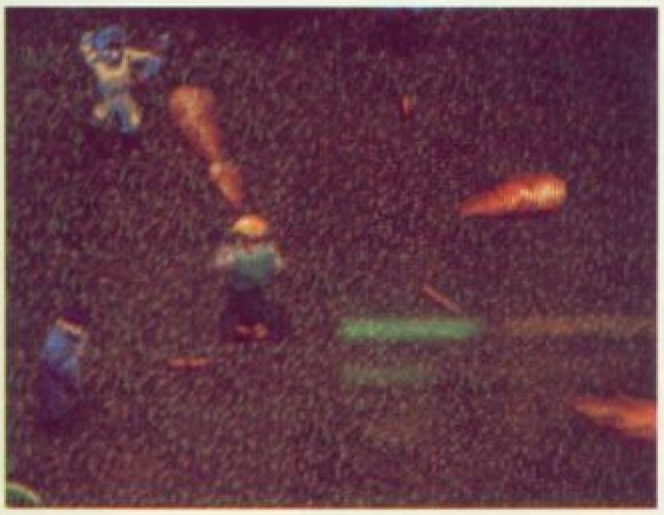


PANG

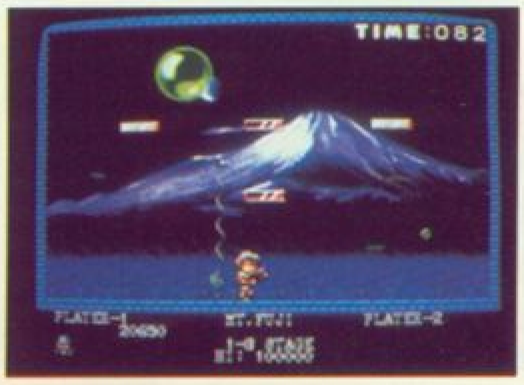
Mitchell Corp

Cross *Asteroids* with *Bomb Jack* and what do you get. Well, who knows - but if *Pang* came out as a result, I wouldn't be at all surprised.

Single screen action, with your little man moving left/right along the bottom, it's your job to clear the level of the balloons that are floating around, by shooting them with your little bow and arrow.

Problem is, burst the big ones - and they turn into two medium sized ones. Burst them - and you get lots off teenie ones. These are the ones that disappear on demand, but meanwhile, if you've been touched by one as it bounces around the place, you loose a life.

Reasonably original, quite addictive once you get into it, expect to see a lot of this one around later in the year.



SWEET LICKS

'To score in Sweet Licks, you have to hit plastic moles on the head with rubber mallet.'

A long time ago.......in a seaside resort far, far away......I can remember pestering the parents for small change and scampering off to the arcade at the end of the pier. To blast away at *R-Type* perhaps? Noooo. To experience total synthesis with the machine while playing *Defender?* Naaaa. It was to put big pennies (yes, we're talking old money, grandad) into archaic mechanical devices to: a) get my fortune told, b) see what the butler saw and finally c) test my strength against a disembodied arm.

Funny how (a) never produced the result, 'You will soon face a disappointment and then be beaten to a pulp by an antique' but, in those days, the fact that things only worked if you thumped 'em (and even then only intermittently) was taken for granted.

There's no denying that those old novelty amusement machine had a certain charm, however, but as soon as *Pong* and *Invaders* turned up, they were the first to hit the scrap heap and are now only found at such places as the Amusement Museum along the promenade in Brighton. But want to hear the surprise news? Mechanical novelty games are back - and this time the lead is coming from Japan.

We all know the Japanese are bonkers, right? We've all seen and heard of the infamous **Endurance**, with Clive James giving us the low down on scores of oriental students being pulled along gravel paths....on their bottoms. And force fed cocktails of Tabasco sauce and liquidised monkey brain. (On the other hand what the hell can they think of **Beadle's About**?). But the arrival of the first of the new wave of Japanese novelty games confirmed all we ever suspected.

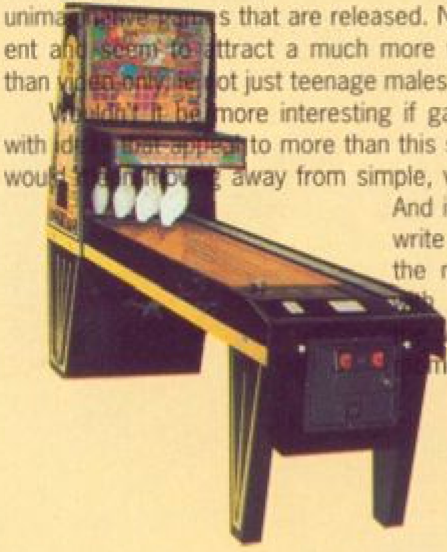
Called Sweet Licks (from Namco) it consisted of a flat table at waist height, out of which popped, from time to time, plastic moles wearing sunglasses. To score, you had to hit them on the head with a padded mallet. As the game goes on and time counts down, the pace gets faster and faster. The player is seen to flail around wildly and - particularly if that person is a middle aged housewife - the thing can justifiably described as much as a Spectator as a Participant sport.

Sweet Licks was a great success and alerted the manufacturers there was a new market to be exploited. Two player versions were made, other variant games constructed, but the big surprise came at the recent JAMMA show in Tokyo. Normally dominated by video games, there was, for the first time, a very significant number of hi-tech novelty machines.

Miniature Golf? Car Racing? Arm Wrestling? Ten Pin Bowling? Ice Hockey? All these were subjects of sophisticated, yet mechanically based machines on display. Talk is of falling revenues found in the traditionally video dominated Japanese arcades - so they're trying to find something new to bring in the crowds. It'll be interesting to see whether that strategy succeeds and if it has any significant effect on the machine spread found in UK arcades next year

But my guess is that the fall off of in video-only arcade revenue is more the punters voting with their Yen against the frequently banal and unimaginative games that are released. Novelties offer something different and seem to attract a much more varied social mix into arcades than video-only, [illegible] not just teenage males.

Wouldn't it be more interesting if game designers could come up with ideas that appeal to more than this single social grouping? But that would [illegible] away from simple, violent, goal orientated games. And it's easier for a programmer to write a whizz bang sprite routine for the next *R-Type* than to come up [illegible] anything, dare one even say [illegible] word, original. Pass the mallet a [illegible] will you, Mum?



SWEET LICKS

3D TETRIS-STYLE COIN-OP GAMEPLAY IN *BLOCK OUT*...

Remember 'novelty games' – mechanical cabinets that told your fortune, armwrestled you, and generally popped and wheezed after you thrust your pennies into them? John Cook muses on their reappearance and picks the best of the bunch of new coin-op releases...

TOKI

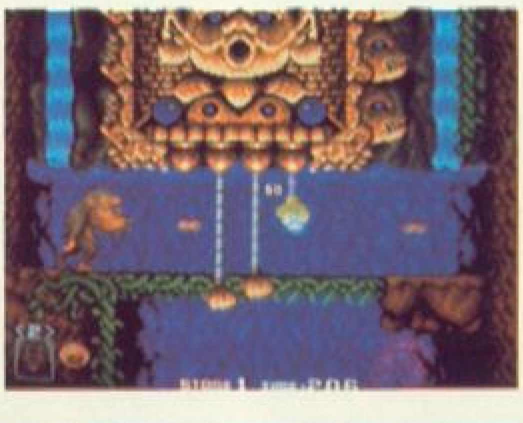
Tao Corp

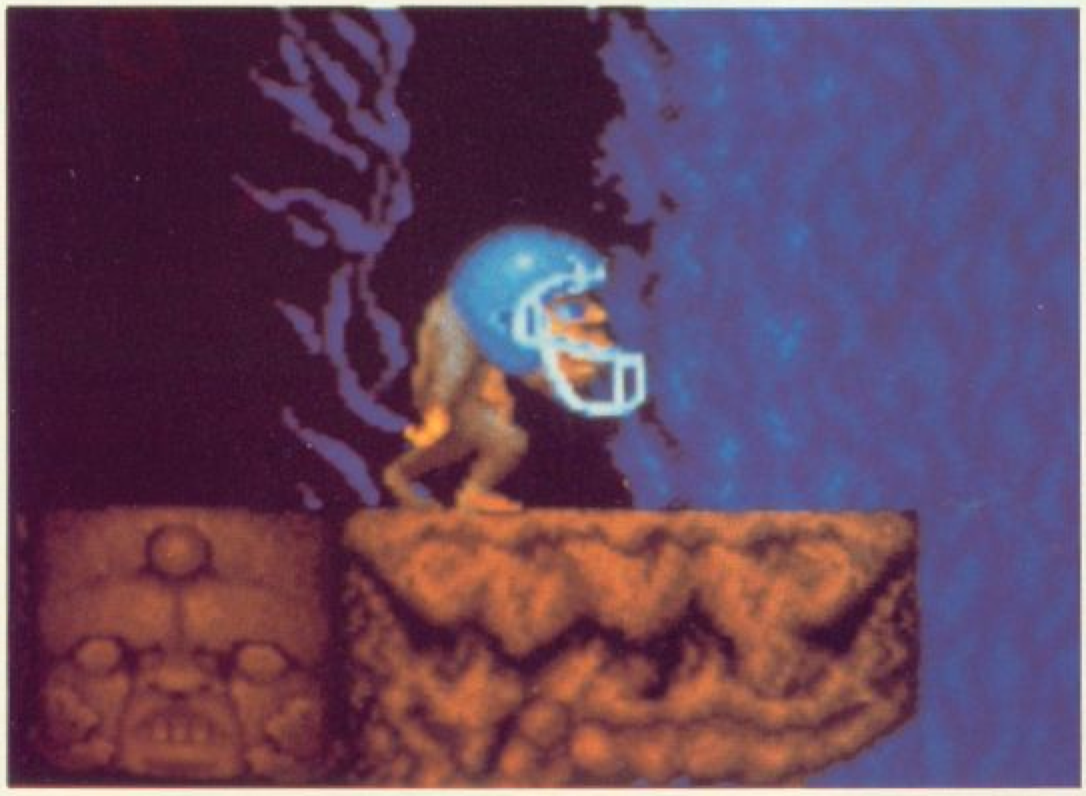
OK. If you're the kinda guy that goes round rescuing Princesses, the you have to face up to the fact that the job has certain occupational hazards. Like being turned into a frog. But when you're turned into a chimp? Well, it's not in the job description, but it's what happens in the opening sequence of *Toki*, as some floozie get carted away by an evil magician and you get devolved by around 512 million years. And it does make a jolly entertaining game.

OK, so it's just another collect/jump/shoot scenario, but at least it's done with a little bit of imagination, flair, and humour. Controls are standard PCB joystick and two fire buttons, one being to jump the other to fire. Firing assorted balls of flaming gob, that is.

Toki does get rather surreal at times - such that playing it under the influence of a severe hangover could cause a full blown psychosis to develop. Collect one power-up - and Toki gets to wear an American Football helmet for protection. Very useful when he comes up against, um.......the lime green and orange flying.....sperm?

However, it's the large sprites and the excellent graphic job - almost reminiscent of *Prehistoric Isle* - that raise it way above the run of the mill and into the recommended category. Give it a try.

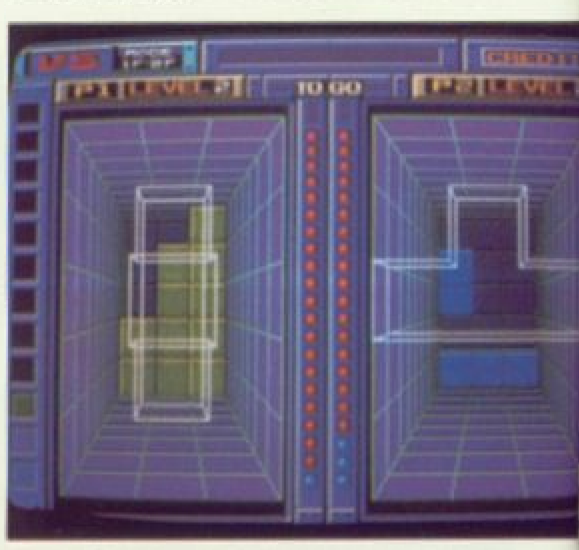




BLOCK OUT

American Technos

This one was previewed in ACE after we'd sneaked a quick glimpse over in America around October time, but has only now reached these shores, on test. Basically, just imagine *Tetris*, but played in full three dimensions.

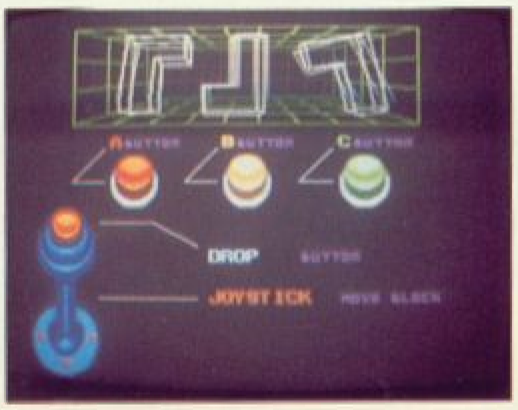


In *Block Out* you have a perspective view looking down into a box, dimensions 4 by 4 by 12, in the One Player mode. Outline shapes appear one at a time and fall down, slowing, under gravity. You can manipulate them in the X, Y and Z axes. When they hit the bottom of the box, or another shape, they turn solid. Like in *Tetris*, you have to make a full horizontal line (or in this case, a square) to make a level of bricks disappear. Easy, eh?

Well, no.

What made *Tetris* so addictive, partly, was it's immediacy. You can pick it up and understand it immediately. When you add a third dimension, it starts losing that - partly because performing X, Y and Z transformations on an outline object makes your brain go funny and partly because if you make a mistake and stack an object right on top of the other, anything underneath it is now obscured, until you clear that object away.

Nice try, however, and it's bound to pick up some fans from the *Tetris* cognoscenti, but it's unlikely that most mortals will want to play it more than a couple of times. My advice? Try *Block Hole* from Konami instead.



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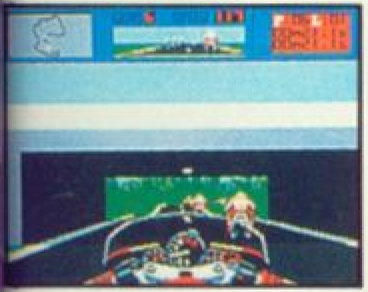

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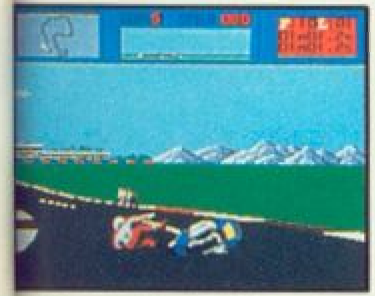
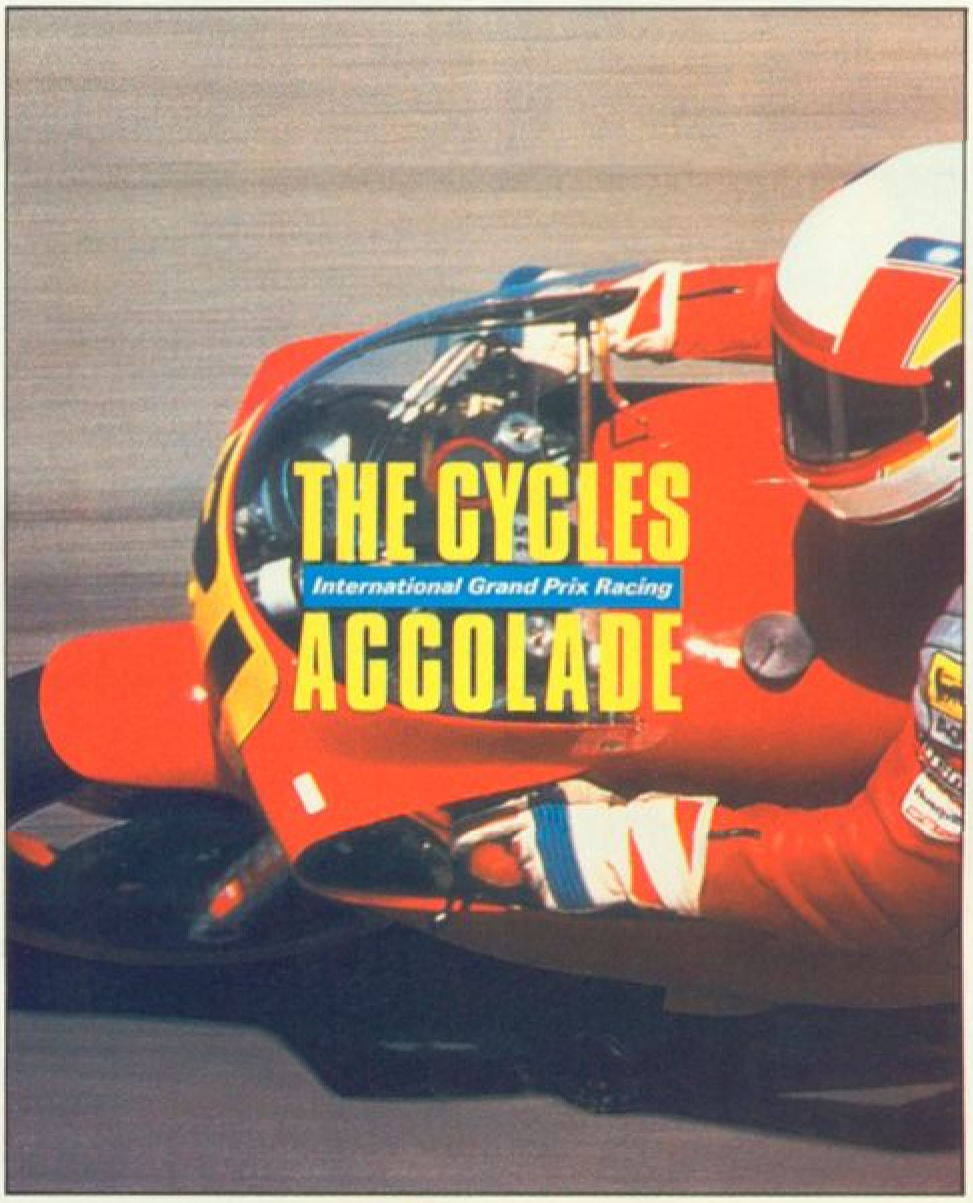


Screen shots from IBM P.C. version.



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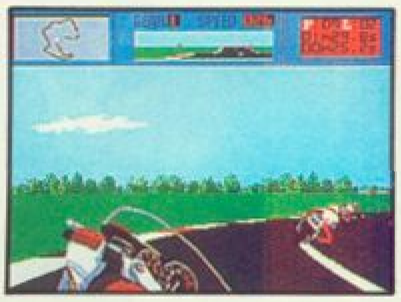

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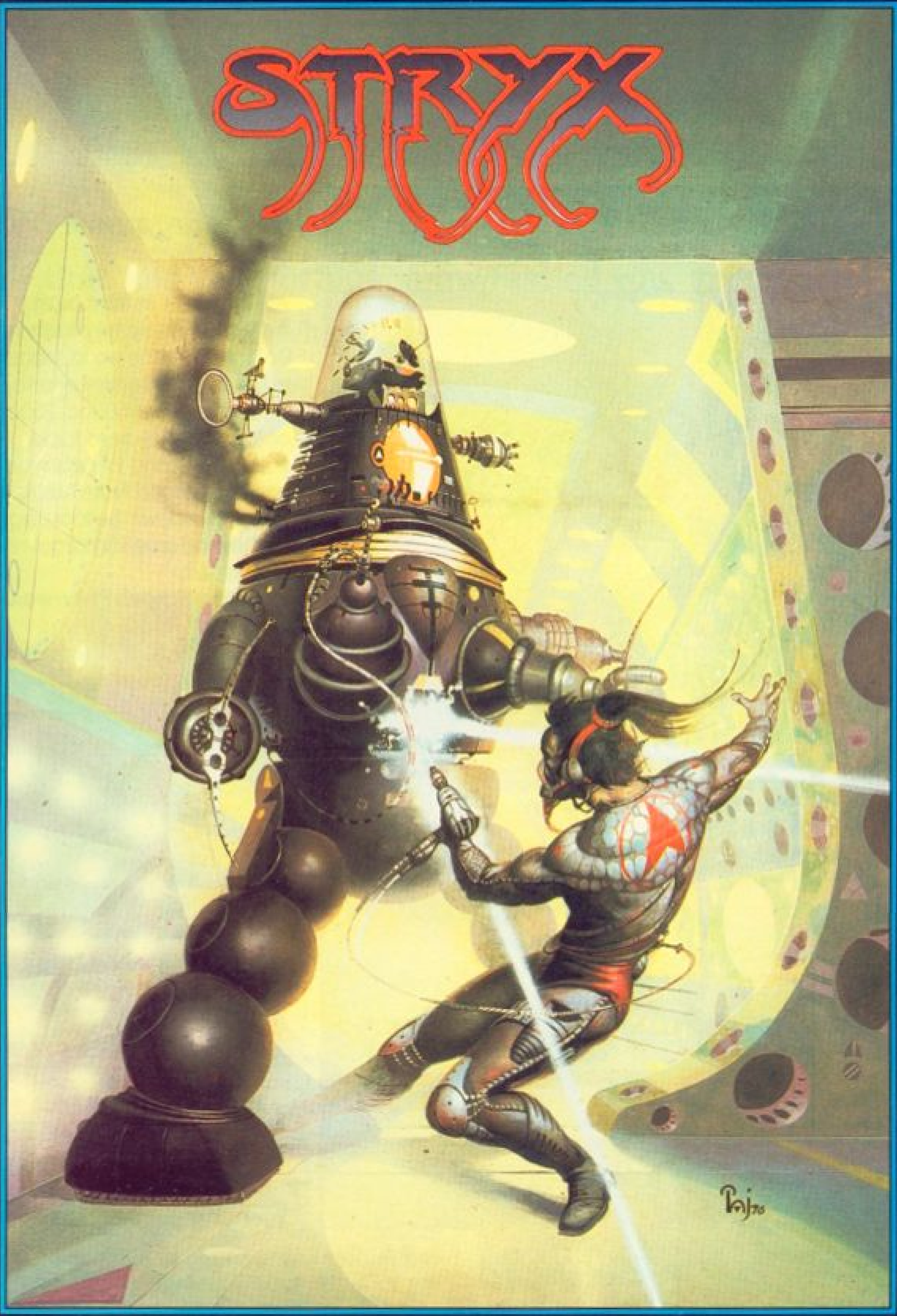

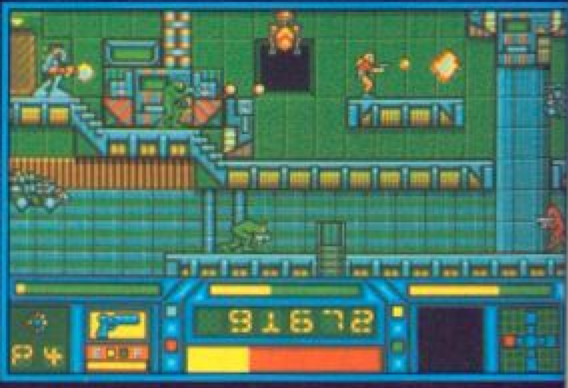

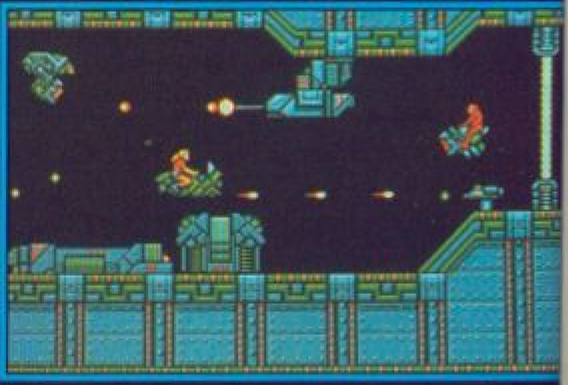

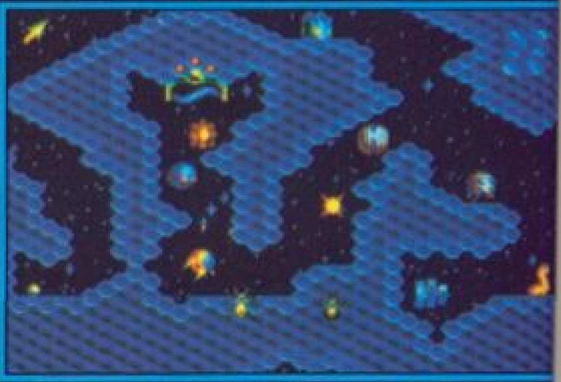

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Fortunately, you are just a little bit on the special side. You are Stryx, the product of Project Alpha Secure, the meanest fighting, smartest thinking machine ever invented. Half-man, half-robot, you are the business, the only one who can stop those wicked Cyborgs.

You'll have to work hard, though, blasting hordes of the revolting creatures (such a sad waste of scrap metal) and rescuing the keys to the Lifeforce.

So, Stryx, you'd better get your jet pack on for some high level robot stomping through the immensely complex underground world of the Dome cities. It's a tough assignment, and time is running out.

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Screen Shots from the Atari ST Version

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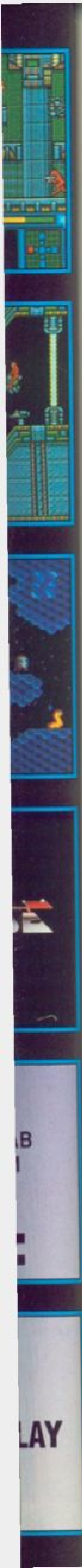


DREAM MACHINE?

We issued the ACE £20000 challenge (see issue 26) to encourage the frank and free discussion of games hardware. This month, a young team of programmers think they've come up with a games player's dream machine. But will the dream come true...?

The five young guys that make up The Mind Boggles Development Team are an enthusiastic bunch of programmers and hardware hacks who have one simple dream – they want to develop the perfect games computer, both in terms of programming and audio-visual quality. The TMB team are taking the concept of the modern day arcade coin-op machine – powerful 16/32-bit processors backed up with loadsa dedicated custom chips for sound and graphics – and planning to put this hitec monster into the home. And, of course, they're wondering whether they'll be picking up the ACE Challenge Trophy as a result...

As dedicated Amiga programmers, TMB have experienced all the mistakes that the original developers made with the Amiga's internal custom chips design. They now hope to radically improve on these deficiencies. The TMB-PC is currently configured with not one but four processors: the main CPU, an intelligent programmable keyboard processor, a memory communication processor, and a graphics processor (rather like the Amiga's Copper), as well as smaller processing hardware to produce the other hardware effects – multiple playfields, automatic MIDI hardware, 32 voice quadraphonic audio, sprites, blitter and polygon/dot/line generators.

GLORIOUS GRAPHICS

The TMB-PC is designed to manipulate up to six playfields (see box). An example of the use of this would be a detailed background picture, a mid-ground where all the action takes place, and a foreground – all held together automatically by the hardware.

On the graphics side, the TMB-PC design currently features three basic resolutions, each available in three formats giving nine in total. The basic resolutions are: 320x256, 640x256 and 1280x256. The three formats are: Normal (256 lines deep), Multisync 1 (512 lines deep) and Multisync 2 (1024 lines deep). The borders on the screen will be set by the programmer (the above resolutions include the border). If the border is removed, the screen can be expanded, giving higher resolution – up to 1400x1100. The feasibility of these resolutions will depend largely on the availability of fast memory and what memory TMB decide to use. It's unlikely, for example, that a 1280x1024 playfield could have 65536 colours.

PLAYFIELDS EXPLAINED

A playfield is a display area. It could be bigger than the visual display area and moved around to give scrolling effects. A playfield is made up of a number of bitplanes, where a bitplane is a binary image held in memory corresponding to what is displayed on the screen, where a 1 means pixel on, 0 means pixel off. Two bitplanes combined give four combinations (00, 01, 10 and 11) – thus giving four colours. Three bitplanes combined give eight combinations (000, 001, 010, 011, 100, 101, 110, 111) – thus giving eight colours, and so forth until 16 bitplanes which give 65536 colours. The TMB-PC contains hardware to support up to 16 bitplanes on a playfield. It's also possible to have more than one playfield overlaid – colour 0 on the top playfield acts as transparent so you can see the second playfield underneath it.

IT ALL SHAPES UP

The Shapes Hardware includes the Blitter, Dot Generator, Line Drawer and Polygon Generator – everything possible is handled by the hardware. The Blitter supports eight channels and using simple multiple-plane registers it can access up to 16 plane images with ease and reduced setting up time. Simple logic operations are possible on all eight channels as data passes through the blitter, including pixel shifting and special logic operations applying to source A channel allowing masks to be generated.

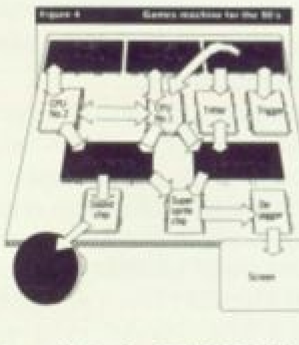
The dot generator may not be developed, but it can draw dots faster than the processor and automatically every frame on any given playfield/bitplane. It processes a NULL terminated list of co-ordinates during the vertical blanking period, drawing them on the required display area. The processor can manipulate the dots via this list to create spectacular effects such as a starfield. The Line Drawer can use any pattern to generate lines and can be programmed to draw directly or apply a simple logic operation to the screen as it draws. The Polygon Generator is the most sophisticated part of the generation game – it can draw shapes and fill them if required. It can also act as a general purpose filler and draw upward of three-sided shapes.

SOUND'S GOOD

TMB claims that '...the audio hardware will be perhaps the most advanced ever seen on a micro, putting most synthesizers to shame'. To back up this statement they cite the TMB-PC's 32 voices capable of playing back a 16/32-bit sound sample in quadraphonic sound. There is also a complex machine generated sound synth and two automatic MIDI ports allowing the custom hardware to interrupt the processor should certain MIDI-messages arrive. 256 levels of volume are provided and there are three audio output connectors: a special 32 voice connector for studios wishing to mix down individual voices, a four way line out connector for the quadraphonic sound providing a signal to go straight into HI-FI AUX/CD in-ports, and a digital output.

BUYING THE DREAM

The TMB-PC is still at the paper stage with the company currently looking for the financial backing needed to help them build a few prototype decks. The TMB'ers also have an interesting scheme for any hardware hacks and code cruisers out there. For an as yet undecided price, TMB will build you a custom designed



The original ACE Challenge specification for an 'ideal games machine shown in diagrammatic form.

John Mathieson, of Flare Technology, with the TMB Development Team. On the floor, the original prototype Flare PCB.

TMB-PC SPECS

Processor	Possibly 32-bit 32GX32-25/30
Memory	1Mb custom RAM, 512K program RAM
Graphics	16 million colours (24-bit palette) resolutions: 320x256, 640x256, 1280x256, 320x512,640x512, 1280x512 320x1024, 640x1024, 1280x1024
Sound	16/32-bit 32 voice quadraphonic sound with 256 volume levels
Custom hardware	Graphics co-processor, Eight 16-plane playfields, 128 hardware sprites, blitter, dot generator, line drawer and polygon generator
Expansion ports	CD-ROM or DVI, disk drive, audio out, SCSI, two RS232, parallel, two MIDI, four joystick, mouse

> *"Normally people*
> *die*
> *laughing when they*
> *hear our company"*
>
> Toby [illegible]. The Mind Boggles Development Ltd

THE ORIGINAL ACE CHALLENGE SPEC

(see issue 26)

1 A tritter capable of redrawing the entire screen area twice every 50th of a second.

2 A trigger that can rotate, translate, or scale at a rate of 10000 vertices per frame.

3 Two identical CPU's, each 32-bits wide and capable of accessing memory at 10MHz.

4 1 million internal pixels and 256 colours on-screen drawn from an 18-bit palette (0.25 million colours).

5 A dejagger – must produce a TV-compatible signal and be able to reduce a square grid to a TV pixel.

6 16K of private SRAM for each processor.

7 At least 1Mb of main memory.

8 A supersprite chip capable of drawing 1000 sprite images per frame, with each one scaled, rotated, and duplicated as required.

9 Development systems must be with software houses at least six months prior to launch, enabling a reasonable software base to be generated for the machine.

10 Production levels must be geared to satisfy demand and deliver machines on time!

development system which you can delve into at your own leisure. TMB hope this idea will appeal to all the underground Amiga crackers and hackers out there in cyberspace. The ultimate goal is to create a huge software base of state of the art demos and utilities available for the machine before it hits the games developers and general public.

DISCUSSING THE DREAM

ACE organised a conference between TMB and Flare Technology – the designers of the Konix Console – to discuss the feasibility of the TMB-PC. Those attending the conference at Flare's offices in Cambridge were: John Mathieson (Flare Technology), Rik Haynes (ACE), Toby Simpson (TMB chairperson), Stephen Mays (TMB secretary) and Mark Cresswell (TMB). After the usual hardware hacker, electro engineering chip-chat the conference got down to the nitty gritty...

On the tech-spec:

[TS] We've split the 32-bit system into half with a full 32-bit address bus. We'll have a DCS communications processor with programmable priority over graphics, blitter and audio hardware registers. This DCS will be based around 68000 architecture and could have an instant crunching facility using on-board memory.

[JM] *It wouldn't take a 68000 to do that – it's a pretty simple task. Parallelism is very useful if you can achieve it. The other great problem you come across with custom chips is pins – all of this is dominated by how many pins you can have on the board.*

[TS] That's something else we hadn't thought about.

On the audio hardware:

[JM] *Sound sampling is appallingly inefficient and uses lots of memory.*

[TS] We hope professional sound studios will be able to use our machine, it could be hooked up to everything and it's going to have two complete MIDI systems. You can just discount what the Amiga does.

On the range of machines currently available:

[TS] Unfortunately nobody's coming up with anything new on the market. The last spectacular thing to appear was the Amiga and that's ridiculously dated now. There is nothing that seems to stand up to the 90's.

[JM] *The software base is a very hard nut to crack, that's why there has only been two generations of micros since 1981.*

On the ACE Challenge Spec:

- A tritter capable of redrawing the entire screen area twice every 50th of a second...

[JM] *The Konix System can do that.*

- A trigger that can rotate, translate, or scale at a rate of 10000 vertices per frame...

[JM] *I think the Konix can do that as well – but it wouldn't be able to do much else at the same time.*

- Two identical CPU's, each 32-bits wide and capable of accessing memory at 10MHz...

[JM] *Parallelism is one of these things that's a wonderful idea provided you can write the software to do it. That's one of the reasons why we won't be winning the £20000!*

- One million internal pixels and 256 colours on-screen drawn from an 18-bit palette (0.25 million colours)...

[JM] *You need a 24-bit palette to get smooth shading that's broadcast quality...*

- A dejagger – must produce a TV-compatible signal and be able to reduce a square grid to a TV pixel...

[JM] *Absolutely essential...if you can do it for the price.*

- A supersprite chip capable of drawing 1000 sprite images per frame, with each one scaled, rotated, and duplicated as required

[TS] *There seems to be very little point of sprites with a blitter or multiple playfields.*

[JM] *I agree, why waste your money doing the same thing, sprites are an old fashioned way to solve a problem.*

VERDICT ON THE DREAM:

[TS] We hope to have three models of the TMB-PC priced from just under £400 to just over £1000.

[JM] Your machine is going to cost too much – you're talking about a lot of silicon. Price is absolutely all in this game. It's a great shame, it does sound very good and I think you've done your work very well – but you haven't engineered the price in. It's a lovely idea, but you won't be able to sell it because it's too expensive. Our skill is cost engineering – doing as much as possible for as little as possible.

ACE would like to say a special thanks to John Mathieson and all at Flare Technology for taking the time out for the conference. All the best for the future!

THE MIND BOGGLES DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

NAME	AGE	CURRENT JOB
Toby Simpson	19	Freelance Programmer
Stephen Mays	19	Computer Systems Manager
Mark Cresswell	18	Computer Science Degree Student
Stephen Loughran	22	HGV Driver
Martyn Oakley	20	Computer Salesman

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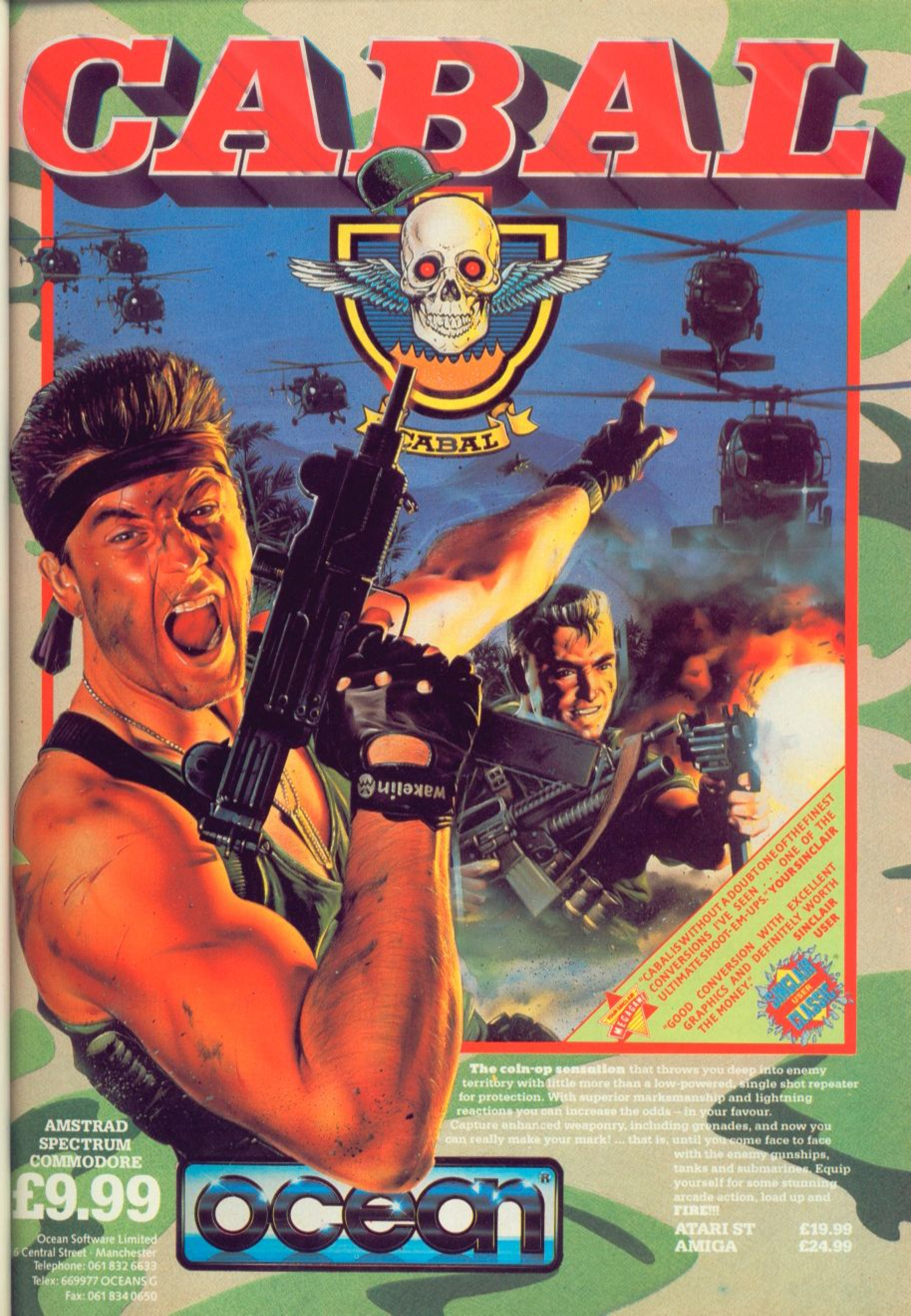
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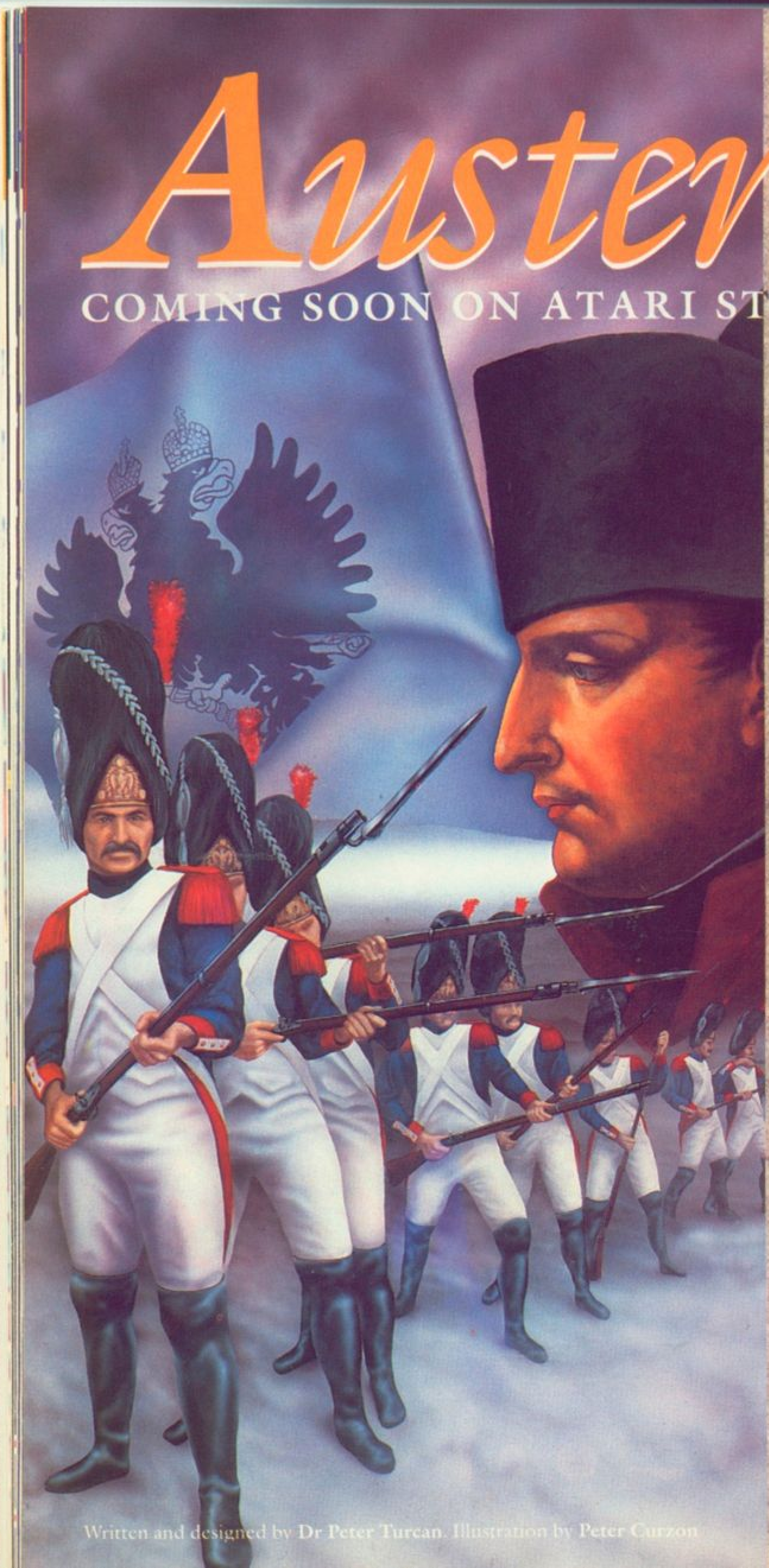

Written and designed by Dr Peter Turcan. Illustration by Peter Curzon

Get ready to experience the Horror and Glory that was th battle of Austerlitz!

The date is the 2nd December 1805 The place is a few miles east of Brunn in the province of Moldavia. Ranged across the barren Pratzen heights ar the forces of the Austro–Russian army Facing them, between Santon Hill and the River Bosenitz is Napoleon's Grand Armée. The greatest battle ever to be fought by France's 'Little Corporal' i about to begin.

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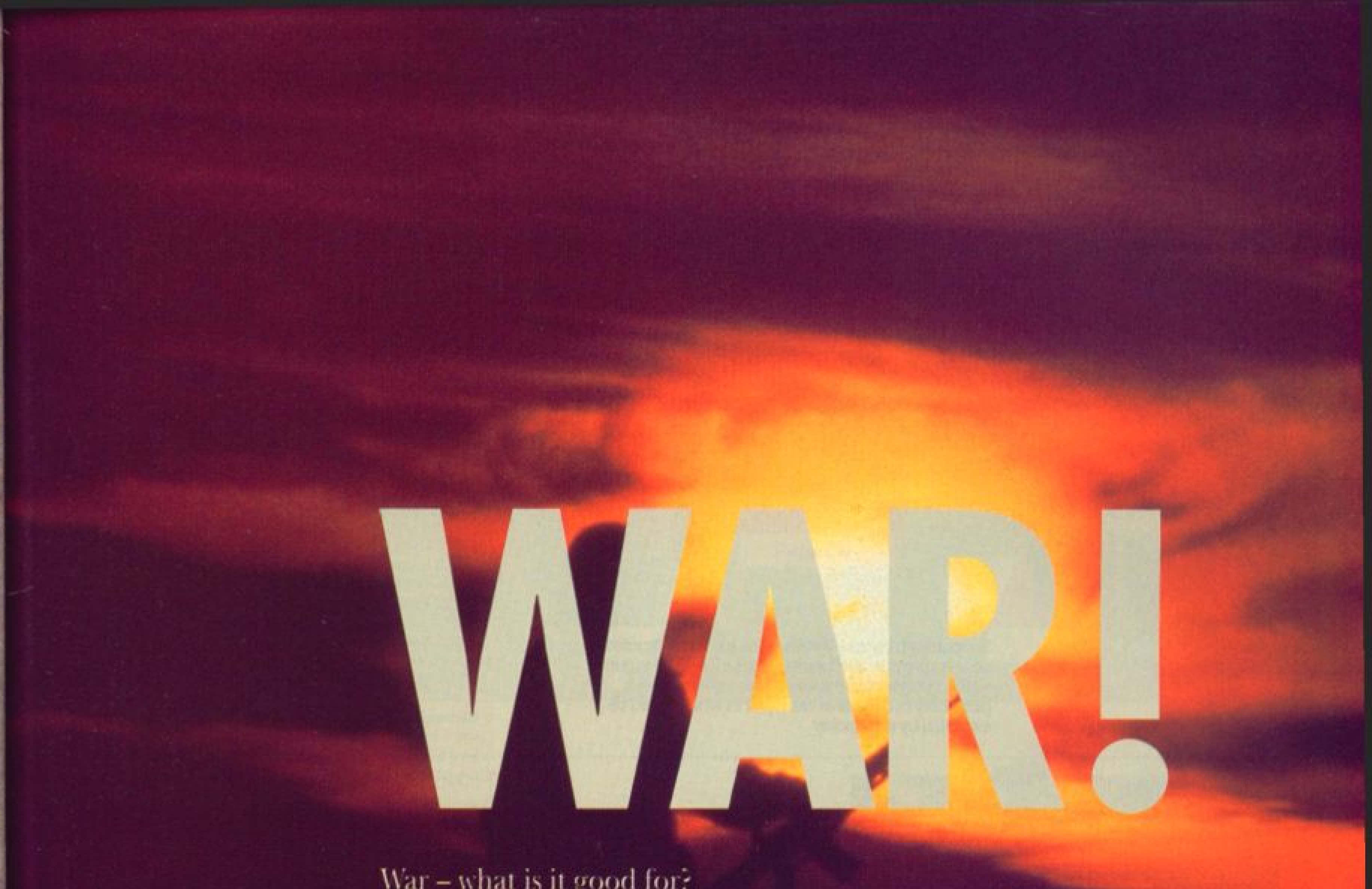


WAR!

War – what is it good for?
Absolutely nothing... except computer games, as John Minson discovers...and just what is a grognard anyway?

If warfare is as old as mankind then wargaming can barely be younger. From children playing with lead soldiers through war-influenced games like chess to careful re-creations of classic encounters, being an armchair general seems to have maintained widespread appeal throughout the ages.

It's no surprise, therefore, that wargames should make the leap from the tabletop to computers. After all, anybody who has ever played a board wargame will know that much of the player's time is spent rolling dice and consulting success tables or movement charts. How much simpler if all the calculations could be left to a computer's number crunching.

OPENING SHOTS

The first wargames were little more than straight conversions of their cardboard counterparts as classic strategy companies like America's Avalon Hill converted their top titles for the Apple and C64. Even if the hex grid (which allows board wargamers to move in one of six directions) wasn't actually visible, its underlying rigidity was ever-present. Units still resembled tokens and terms such as 'stacking limits', referring to how many units could occupy a hex, were found in the instructions. Omega's *Siege On The Volga* even came with map and counters; the computer just worked out the movements.

One reason the first micro wargames were simulations of board wargames rather than the battles themselves was the backgrounds of the authors. Peter Turcan (*Borodino, Waterloo*) had started a wargames club when he was 14. Steve Thorneycroft (*Conflict Europe*) had ample time to play Avalon Hill's games while he was on the dole. Jonathan Griffith (*Conqueror*) progressed from Airfix tanks to tabletop miniatures and John Lambshead (*Fourth Protocol*) was a university wargamer before editing The Gamer magazine.

> *War (n) A by-product of the arts of peace. The most menacing political condition is a period of international amity... Let us have a little less of 'hands across the sea' and a little more of that elemental distrust that is the security of nations.*
>
> **Ambrose Bierce**

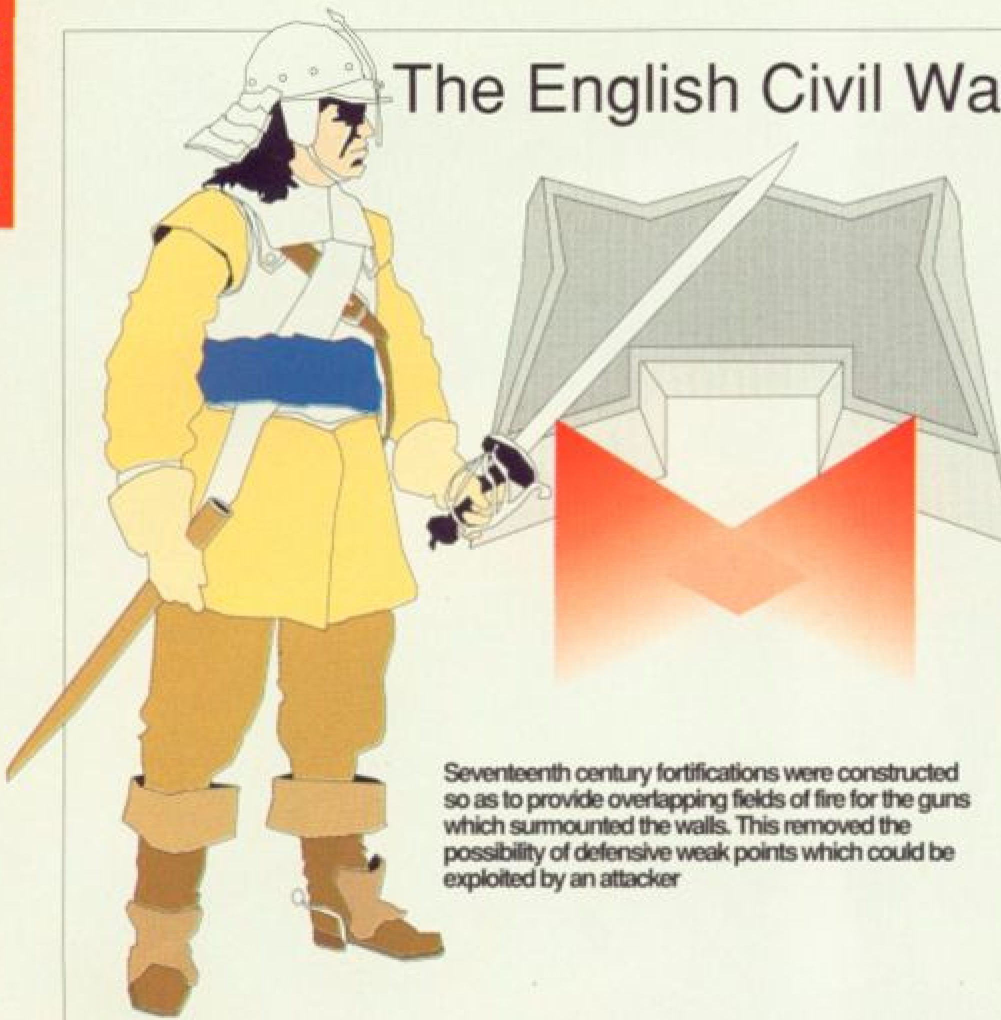
Traditional gamers were re-assured by this recognisable link to their hobby. In fact the popularity of computer battles seems to have all but eliminated the board variety. But for the less committed computer owner it must have seemed a far remove from the increasing smoothness of arcade games. Despite the best efforts of companies such as SSI in the States and PSS over here, wargaming remained very much a niche market.

THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

So what IS the appeal of giving orders to a token representing so many tens or hundreds of men? Don't you have to be a bit of a gung-ho militarist to want to prove that you can kill more of the enemy than Patton? Not according to the wargame designers. 'It's the ultimate challenge,' says Peter Turcan. Steve Thorneycroft supports him, "There is something very satisfying about beating an opponent in a wargame. It's a kind of mental thing." But there are plenty of other ways to stimulate your brain cells; why this particular one?

To start with, wargamers are pitting themselves against history. Ezra Sidran of Intergalactic Development, creator of UMS (the Universal Military Simulator), was an American

The English Civil War



Seventeenth century fortifications were constructed so as to provide overlapping fields of fire for the guns which surmounted the walls. This removed the possibility of defensive weak points which could be exploited by an attacker

By the seventeenth century all over defensive plate armour had given way to the lighter and less constrictive buff coat, reinforced at vunerable points such as the head and chest by steel armour. The Parliamentary forces were reorganised by Oliver Cromwell to create the 'New Model Army', better trained and equipped than previous Parliamentary armies. The troopers of Cromwells new force were easily recognisable by their characteristic 'lobster pot' helmets.

GENERALS AND MAJORS

PSS – Now under Cap'n Bob's Mirrorsoft command, PSS is one of the British pioneers of wargaming with a track record which takes in everything from the Annals of Rome to World War II in Conflict Europe. Originally very much based on traditional wargaming concepts, throughout the last decade the Coventry based firm has moved towards a more modern style with Waterloo and Austerlitz.

ARC – Atari's software label is also publishing games from Peter Turcan for a range of machines, including Borodino and Armada, a rather belated tribute to the great sea-battle which celebrated its 400th anniversary over twelve months ago.

SSI – America's SSI dates back to the beginning of home computing in 1979 with Computer Bismark, programmed on a borrowed computer by enthusiast Joel Billings. Since then over a hundred games have been released, ranging from hardcore simulation through fantasy strategy scenarios to the AD&D licensed rpg titles. Distributed by US Gold in the UK.

SSG – All the way from down under, and if the name rings a bell it could be that company co-founder Roger Keating previously worked for SSI. Being a group rather than and Inc. is one strategy for winning the war of who comes first in the phone book. Originally programming for the the Apple II and C64, SSG retains a sense of wargames by enthusiasts, for enthusiasts, with a broad range of historical and a few fantasy scenarios. Distributed by Electronic Arts in the UK.

Microprose/Rainbird – Bill Stealey's boys in uniform started with a couple of traditional wargames before concentrating solely on simulations. Subsidiary Rainbird has the rights to UMS, the state of the art simulator. (See separate boxes)

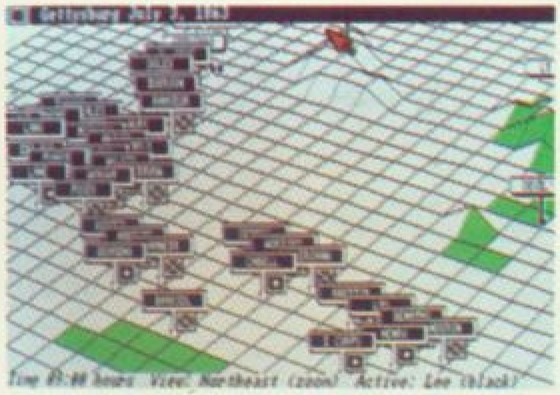
Rainbow Arts – Though not known as a simulation house, the Germans have the rights to Conqueror, the Archimedes tank battle game for the ST, Amiga and PC.

Mindscape – Apart from the classic Balance of Power, Mindscape will be releasing Guns and Butter from the same author, Chris Crawford. The odd title? It comes from a remark made by Roosevelt about America's Second World War food shortage that the choice was guns or butter. The game will concentrate on the economics of global warfare.

CDS – The chess specialist produced an odd but fun computer moderated board game hybrid in the form of Tank Attack. Lots of little plastic tanks and a stylized hex-board make up a fun diversion for two to four players.

Civil War enthusiast, visiting sites of battles. And surely one reason for the perennial popularity of Napoleon's battles is that gamers want to see if they can outdo the diminutive strategist.

There's also the rapidly changing nature of computer wargames themselves, making them more appealing and more accessible. However, there's still something of the inepenetrable nature of the traditional wargame format. After all, if it's bad enough moving little counters decorated with odd symbols around a paper map, it's even more confusing when you can't see the complete playing area because it's bigger than the screen. Fortunately today's wargame designers are packaging battles with front-ends that makes them far more friendly.



The Pentagon bought copies of UMS – and the STs to run them – where the joint chiefs of staff use them for computerised command exercises. Undisturbed by the moral implications of this, Ezra Sidran shrugs it off: 'I saw it coming and what the hell.'

Steve Thorneycroft claims that *Conflict Europe*'s command systems is: 'Easy to play. It's not necessarily simple but it shouldn't take a couple of hours to put in an order. If [keeping track of all the units] can be made easier for people to relate to then more people will become involved.' Certainly the game, with its war-room and command terminials, is more attractive and accessible than some of its predecessors.

A greater worry for Thorneycroft is the program's intelligence. 'A good game should present you with logical feedback and not do something out of order.' This isn't just relevant to games where the program provides the opposition but also when your orders might be over-ruled by the computerised commander in the field interpreting them differently. The code must cope with the most unpredictable human choices. 'It only takes somebody doing something odd and the machine throws a wobbler.' The great advantage of computerising the opponent is that it makes playing mammoth campaigns much more viable, particularly when there's a save routine. No more of those ten hour marathons at the end of which your kid brother knocks over the gaming table, decimating your army as it's on the verge of victory!

A NEW CAMPAIGN

Other designers have gone further in getting away from the map and counters approach. John Lambshead believes, 'Traditional wargames don't convert to the computer well and I don't believe people have approached them properly.' For a radically different type of approach, you could try his classic, icon-driven *Fourth Protocol*. 'If you dig very deep, the packaging may be an adventure game but the first part is very wargame structured. It's a resource handling game.' Resource handling, whether it's tank battalions or spies, is what command is all about.

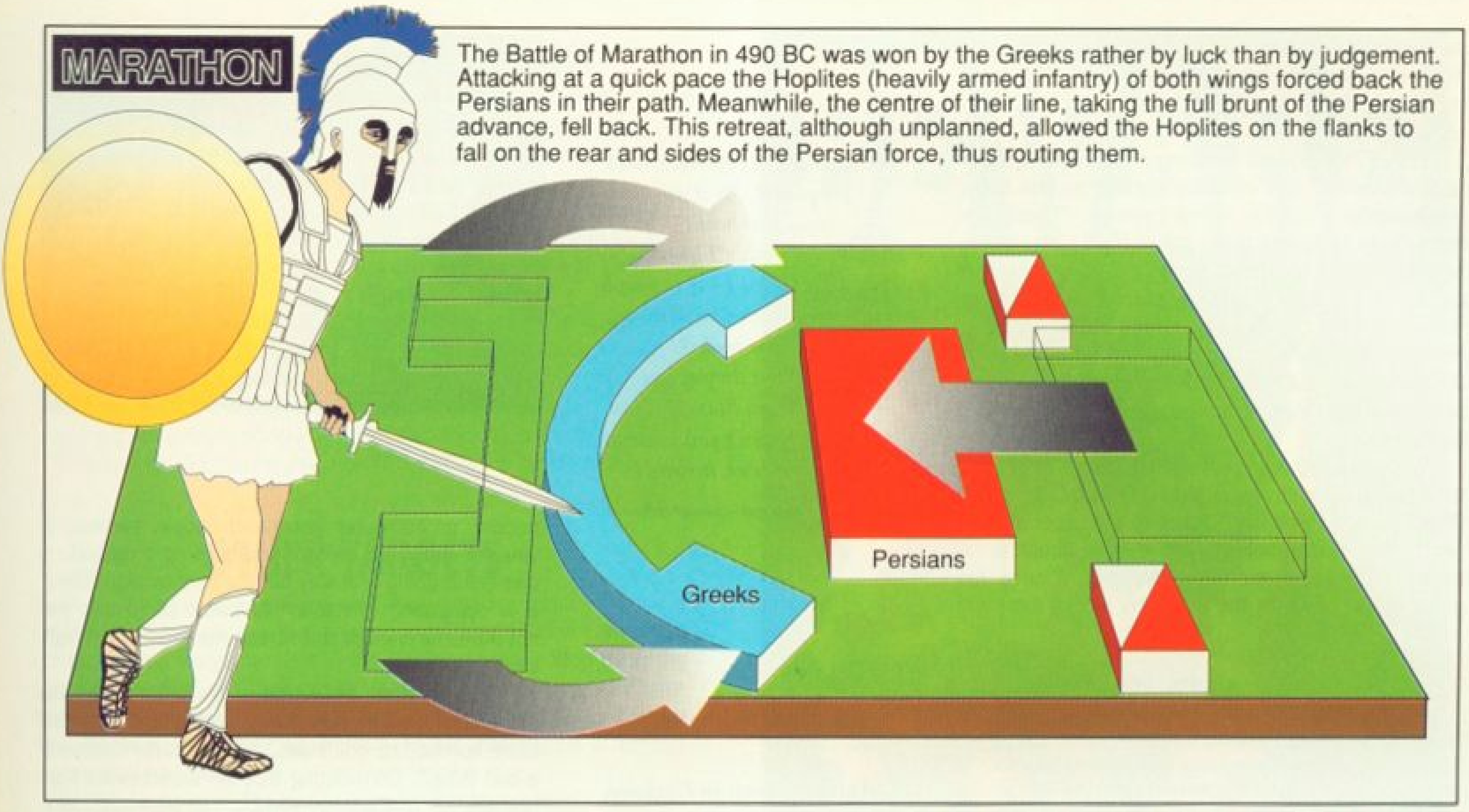
One program that did impress Lambshead was *UMS*. Ezra Sidran says, 'I think it was a big advan-

CONQUEROR

Jonathan Griffith's *Conqueror*, originally an Archimedes game but about to make its appearance across the 16-bit battlefield, attempts to retain the mental challenge of tank battles without tying it up in historical details. He has also avoided the concept of turns which are crucial to board games. Instead of moving your tanks then waiting while the enemy moves, you give orders then actions occur simultaneously. 'I split everything down into discrete units so you can't jump over each other. I've tried to bridge the gap between a playable concept and traditional wargames.'

Using a system similar to the one that generated *Virus*'s landscapes, he has taken his scenario a step towards abstraction without removing all traces of reality. This is a single tank battle so you don't have to worry about what's happening elsewhere in the war. Still, he researched the capabilities of the tanks, at Bovington tank museum and elsewhere, to ensure that gun power and armour plating were accurately represented. The result should appeal to the casual player as well as the military simulationist.

MARATHON



The Battle of Marathon in 490 BC was won by the Greeks rather by luck than by judgement. Attacking at a quick pace the Hoplites (heavily armed infantry) of both wings forced back the Persians in their path. Meanwhile, the centre of their line, taking the full brunt of the Persian advance, fell back. This retreat, although unplanned, allowed the Hoplites on the flanks to fall on the rear and sides of the Persian force, thus routing them.

tage not to have looked at other computer wargames. I took what I wanted.' What he wanted was a radically different approach to the genre. 'People had been treating it as board wargaming and it was all in 2D. They were just using the computer as a referee.' Sidran realised that this was under-using the micro-chip.

The most striking aspect of *UMS* is its wireframe graphic display which allows you to see the contours of the land. Taking the high ground can be of crucial strategic importance and *UMS* is able to present this without resorting to techniques more suited to third year geography classes. There's also a drop down menu command system which eases the novice general's role.

Developing a basic system into which you can load new scenarios (as in *UMS*) seems sensible but Peter Turcan has his reservations. His initial idea was to use the core of *Borodino* for a series of games but it didn't quite work out like that. 'You can't use it for anything because of historical details and quirks of battles, such as the frozen lakes at Austerlitz. The *UMS* approach in my opinion doesn't really work. You have to research the battle fully and it can't cope with all those details. For instance, when the Prussians arrive at Waterloo you have a third force on your side but they're not under your control.'

> *'He saw the dragoons near, and that they were galloping in disorder; he knew they could not withstand an attack – knew there was only that moment, and if he let it slip it would not return. The bullets were whining and whistling so stimulatingly around him and his horse was so eager to go, that he could not restrain himself.'*
>
> **Leo Tolstoy (trans Louise and Aylmer Maude) – *War and Peace***

Microprose's Midwinter is a typical Mike Singleton (*Lords of Midnight*) scenario which owes a lot to the wargame concept. Strategy involves more the manipulation of human resources than the deployment of hardware (as in, for example, *M1 Tank Platoon*).

While none of this should send the hardened grognard (traditional wargamer) into apoplexy, it may come as a relief that Australia's Strategic Studies Group still prefer the 'counters and map' approach to accurate simulation. The ethos of the wargaming society can still be found in their programs and accompanying magazine, Run 5, with its maps and diagrams, none of which will look odd to a devotee of The General.

However the editorial in Issue 12 of Run 5 contains a cry for help: 'It seems that a number of the large software distribution chains in the US have decided to reduce the number of titles they carry.' Their answer? 'Evangelize.' But is this a realistic alternative or will the historical hardcore dwindle into a select, specialist band? It would be sad to see companies such as SSG forced out by a war of attrition if only because they are able to treat skirmishes other than perennials like Waterloo with the accuracy they deserve. In their back catalogue you'll find battles from MacArthur's Korean campaign in the fifties to three volumes taking you through the American Civil War.

Veteran of ten years, SSI is facing something of the same problem but has chosen a different solution. Pick up an SSI catalogue and you'll pass through pages of *Dungeons and Dragons* before you reach the first of the wargames on which the compa-

UMS II OPENS FIRE

It's not true that Bill Stealey bought Rainbird just so he could get free supplies of *UMS* for his buddies in the Pentagon. But one can only suppose that Intergalactic's classic was an attraction, particularly as Microprose had toyed with wargames in the past.

The idea for *UMS* came to Sidran ten years ago when he was working as an art director in Hollywood and hating it. The opportunity to take a degree in computer graphics let him learn the techniques he'd require and he concentrated on course units such as wire-frame graphics, 3D and artificial intelligence. The last area is particularly important; the AI is based around heuristics which means it deals with concepts rather than specifics, so the computer can take care of situations the game's designer may never have foreseen.

Sidran says he never saw himself as an innovator: 'On a computer it's so easy to do.' Coming up with a successor can't have been so simple. But *UMS II – Nations at War*, sounds set to take imaginative wargaming into a new dimension. The scale has increased from the battlefield to the whole world and what better scenario to start with than the global campaign of Alexander the Great, a mammoth project which will conquer a complete ST disk just for data.

'One of the things we had to build in was a military command structure to give commands in various levels,' explains Sidran. 'If you look at Alexandria you might see five groups of troops. You can then become one of Alexander's commanders or go further and become a phalanx commander. As you zoom in the smaller the level of command becomes.'

UMS II has not just taken in more territory; there are deeper, psychological factors to take into account when the world's your slayground. 'We have tons more variables in UMS II. One is the national will because we are involved in war at province level. As a province suffers more casualties its will goes down until it can be conquered.' Megalomaniacs should place their orders now; *UMS II* should be out in the next few months.

ny built its reputation. Just as role playing seduced the less committed board simulationists, SSI is selling *Panzer Strike* and *Shiloh* on the back of swords and sorcery.

Steve Thorneycroft confirms the attraction of fantasy scenarios – he's currently working on one called *Battlemaster* – but has some caveats. 'People are more likely to accept them rather than a recreation, which they tend to think is stodgy. If it's fantasy they can relate it to their arcade experience. But you have to be careful in the way you handle magic systems.' He refers to *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* where a complex set of skirmish rules are made redundant because a high level wizard can wipe out armies with his powers.

So how will the warriors of the future fight? Will they stay on the strategic level of mental challenge. Or will games come ever closer to the experience of war? Peter Turcan believes we've gone about as far as we can in the re-creation stakes. "You're not going to get close to the emotions unless there are people, or computer generated people, involved; if you get simulated reports and build up a rapport. I can see it going that way but not very quickly. There is a computing obstacle that home computers are not powerful enough and screen resolution is not high enough.'

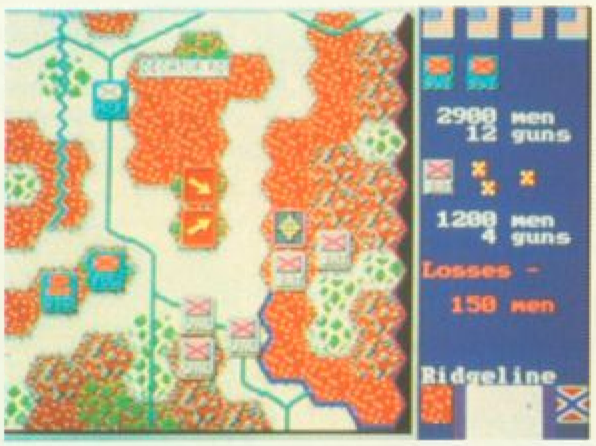
'But the more believable a simulation becomes, the less of a game it becomes, because it becomes more horrific,' he continues, '...and maybe that's not a bad thing?' Considering that the superpowers now prepare for real war by running computerised mainframe military exercises, high in tactical content but lacking the human level of sending another hundred 19 year olds to be mown down, it could be a very good thing indeed!

"...he raised his eyebrows and
inquired, "Is it an
anti-war book?"
"Yes," I said. "I guess."
"You know what I say to people
when I hear they're writing
anti-war books?"
"No. What do you say,
Harrison Starr?"
""I say, 'Why don't you write an
anti-glacier book instead?'"

Kurt Vonnegut – *Slaughterhouse 5*

'...And gentlemen in England,
now abed,
Shall think themselves accursed
they were not here;
And hold their manhoods cheap
whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon St
Crispin's day.'

(Henry V rallying his troops:
Shakespeare – Henry V)



BLOOD AND GUTS?

Peter Turcan is one of many who deny the militaristic aspects of wargaming. 'What a wargame does is remove the horror, the blood and you're left with a competition between two men (or between one man and a micro).' The scale of each unit helps depersonalize the combat. Steve Thorneycroft remembers playing a game called Firepower, which was based around man to man combat. "It was just sickening. Somebody getting blown away. I just didn't want to know.'

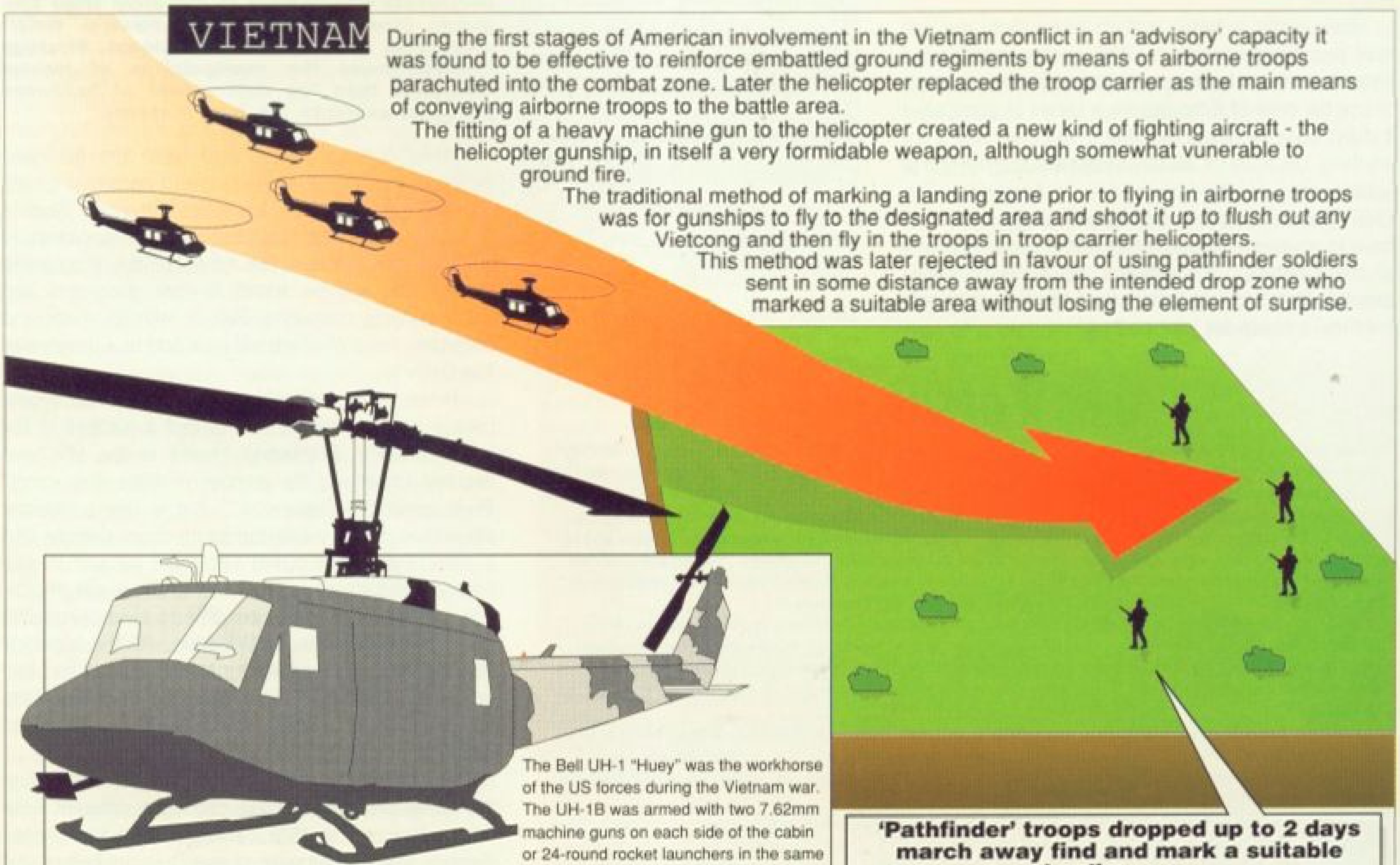
'I prefer playing on a higher level,' he continues. 'It's just a game and I don't want to see the emotional level. Morals are a personal decision. You're not going to glorify it – people did die.' Ezra Sidran reckons a third of the UMS users are pacifists. 'It's a wargame in a bell-jar, a vacuum. They play it like chess."

So it's okay to be a general so long as you remember it's just a mental challenge and you're not actually sending men to their deaths. In fact gaming may even increase your understanding of the futility of warfare as you realise the inevitability of the loss of life. That said, the distinction between th indulgence of blood lust and mental challenge is never, in this case, going to be an easy one to draw.

UMS SCENARIOS

Don't neglect the U in UMS either. It's Universal because the battle data can be separately loaded allowing you to fight everything from the Trojan Wars to Vietnam. As well as the two scenario disks sold by Rainbird there are literally hundreds of scenarios available in the public domain on bulletin boards, according to Sidran. 'You get the Zulu war right next to Godzilla vs Napoleon,' he chuckles.

VIETNAM



During the first stages of American involvement in the Vietnam conflict in an 'advisory' capacity it was found to be effective to reinforce embattled ground regiments by means of airborne troops parachuted into the combat zone. Later the helicopter replaced the troop carrier as the main means of conveying airborne troops to the battle area.

The fitting of a heavy machine gun to the helicopter created a new kind of fighting aircraft - the helicopter gunship, in itself a very formidable weapon, although somewhat vunerable to ground fire.

The traditional method of marking a landing zone prior to flying in airborne troops was for gunships to fly to the designated area and shoot it up to flush out any Vietcong and then fly in the troops in troop carrier helicopters.

This method was later rejected in favour of using pathfinder soldiers sent in some distance away from the intended drop zone who marked a suitable area without losing the element of surprise.

The Bell UH-1 "Huey" was the workhorse of the US forces during the Vietnam war. The UH-1B was armed with two 7.62mm machine guns on each side of the cabin or 24-round rocket launchers in the same locations

'Pathfinder' troops dropped up to 2 days march away find and mark a suitable landing zone

BATTLES YOU *MUST* FIGHT

You could do a lot worse than kick off with *UMS*, though the forthcoming release of *UMS II* might be a cause for hesitation. *UMS* costs £24.95 for the ST, PC, and Amiga and of course you get all the additional scenario options as well.

More conventionally there's *Austerlitz* from PSS (distributed by Mirrorsoft at £24.99 for ST, Amiga, and PC). You could for a more up-to-date presentation of the old-style games with *Conflict Europe* (same availability as *Austerlitz*).

Halls of Montezuma is another traditional scenario from SSG and available here from EA at £18.95 on C64 disk, £24.95 on the PC, and an Amiga version to come in the New Year.

Fire Brigade is another Australian title to look out for, and US Gold have many good 8-bit SSI titles including *Panzer Strike* and *Shiloh*. Phone them on 021 625 3388 for details.

OTHER TARGETS

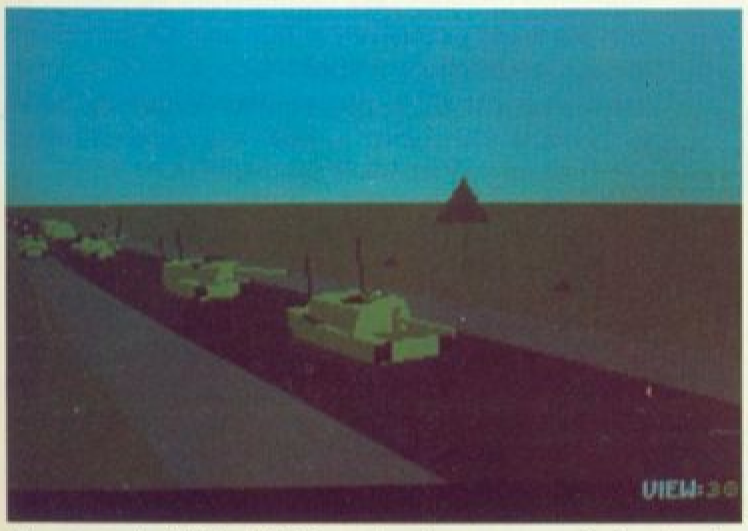
There are more ways of waging war than ordering armies around a battlefield. You could say that a game like Elite's coin-op conversion *Commando* is a wargame. But this is forcing a point. Strip away the battlefield graphics and they can be replaced with anything from cowboys to cute bunnies. The pure arcade shoot 'em up is too far removed from the reality of warfare to be considered a serious approach to the topic.

A step in the right direction is a game like Microprose's *Airborne Ranger* which combines the real-time thrills of the arcade game with a modicum of realistic detail. You are not just a sprite with several lives but have to act as a soldier would on a covert mission behind enemy lines.

A similar element of strategy has entered the same company's simulations. It's no longer enough to be able to fly an F-15 and shoot down anonymous enemy jets. Nowadays the dogfights have a context and you'll plan a mission from and hopefully back to base, taking in the surrounding landscape. To survive in the recent *M1 Tank Platoon* you'll need to use your brain as well as your big guns.

Another interesting approach comes from Ocean's *Lost Patrol*, a Cinemaware-style Vietnam scenario. Designer Ian Harling put in months of research, actually obtaining original training manuals, so that the player's experience would come as close to that of troops in Big Muddy as would be bearable. In fact, as he read more about the brutalities of 'Nam he seriously started to question whether it was a suitable topic for a game.

His solution was to add another dimension to the arcade skills required to take out a guard in unarmed combat or cross a minefield with only your knife as a probe, and the tactics you'll need to choose the safest route back to base. At points in the game you'll also have to make tough human decisions, such as which of your troops is the most expendable. And how will you choose to interrogate villagers to discover if they belong to the VietCong? Question them kindly or apply the sort of force that eventually shocked the world? At last the wargamer will face serious moral decisions.



Microprose's *M1Tank Platoon* involves many strategic elements that derive from traditional wargaming. You also get a 3D map display, comprehensive mission options, and a vast, detailed manual. Specialisation of this sort could be one of the future scenarios of computer wargaming.

BEWARE

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ACE will also be acting as a communications link between you, the readers, and software houses during 1990. We're setting up a series of ACE conferences in which readers will be given the opportunity to meet software houses and talk to them about their games (and you don't have to be polite either!) on an informal basis. Lunch will be supplied and admission will be **free** to subscribers, who will also receive **priority allocation** – a valuable bonus since space at conferences will be strictly limited. Each event will be fully covered in the magazine, so you could get your mug in the mag as a bonus!

InterfACE

Subscribers will receive, completely free of charge, a special quarterly newsletter put together exclusively for them by the ACE Team. This will bring you details of some of the topics that we can't, for reasons of space or secrecy (!), mention in the magazine itself. Subscribers will have the chance to contribute to it if they wish. With ACE every month, and InterfACE every three months, you'll really be at the cutting edge of the computer entertainment revolution.

THE ACE

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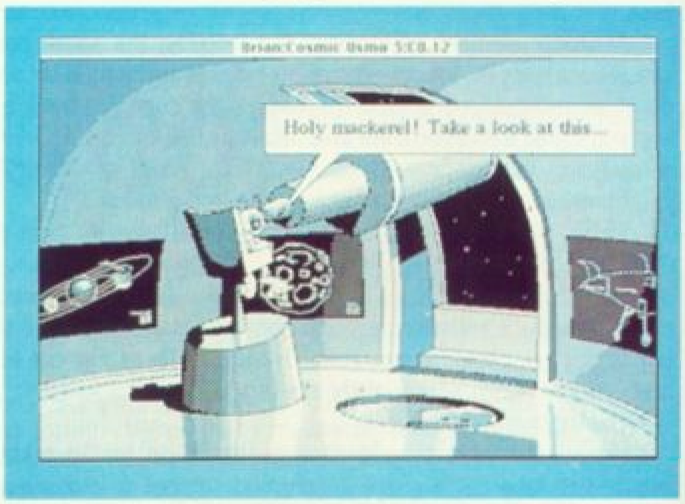
ACE was launched in 1988 by a small team of **dedicated computer entertainment** journalists. They wanted to produce a games magazine that would, for the first time, appeal to people who really **took their games seriously** and who, like the ACE Team, wanted to go beyond game reviews into the world of **advanced entertainment technology.**

One year later and the magazine was outselling its rivals and being voted **Magazine of the Year.** In recent months, ACE has brought you **exclusive** coverage of:



Brian:Cosmic Osmo 5:E0.12

Holy mackerel! Take a look at this...

Hypergames: the game style that began with *Manhole* and *Cosmic Osmo* and is paving the way for CD-I entertainment – defined and described for the **first time** in ACE.

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Interactive Compact Disk Entertainment: the Phillips CD-I unit, previewed **exclusively** in ACE and due for release in the next few months at under £1000.

FM Towns: a 32-bit Japanese games monster with a built-in CD-ROM that carries a mean *AfterBurner* conversion and a **staggering technical specification.**

PLEASE LOOK AFTER THIS DOG!

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One of ACE's prime roles over the next few years is to campaign for wider acceptance and coverage of computer entertainment. We've set up a broadcasting working party to liaise with TV and Radio on behalf of our readers and we'll be keeping you updated on our progress throughout the year.

ACE will also be running a unique reader campaign in early 1990. If you've got a copy of the relevant issue, you'll be able to take part in the largest computer games publicity exercise ever: don't miss it! What's more, if you subscribe, you can take part in person at one of the ACE Conferences: see the Subscribers' Exclusive box for more details....

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...plus a host of other exclusive, in-depth articles on the **cutting edge** of computer entertainment.

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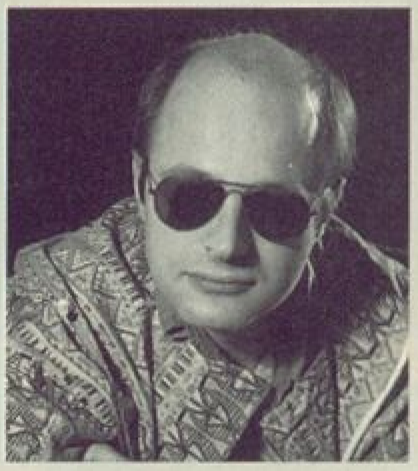


We've now got **Steve Cooke**, the original editor who, in conjunction with Pete Connor, was responsible for the early success of the magazine. Pete will be supporting the magazine on a regular basis as a valued freelance consultant.

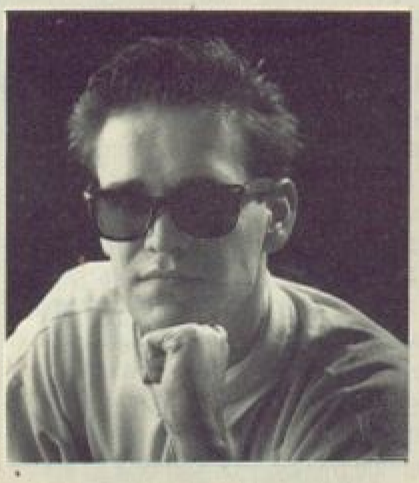
Steve knows the entertainment industry backwards. Not only was he one of the original Personal Computer Games team back in the early '80's, but he's also involved in script production for stage and film. His knowledge of these other industries will bring ACE readers exclusive highlights in the rapidly emerging world of CD-I and multi-media entertainment.

Rik Haynes

Rik is ACE's deputy editor, and the man who really keeps his finger on the pulse of the computer games scene. He was previously the Reviews Editor for the weekly magazine New Computer Express and his background of investigative journalism will be bringing ACE readers the latest developments in entertainment technology every month, maintaining the magazine's excellent reputation for breaking the biggest stories first...

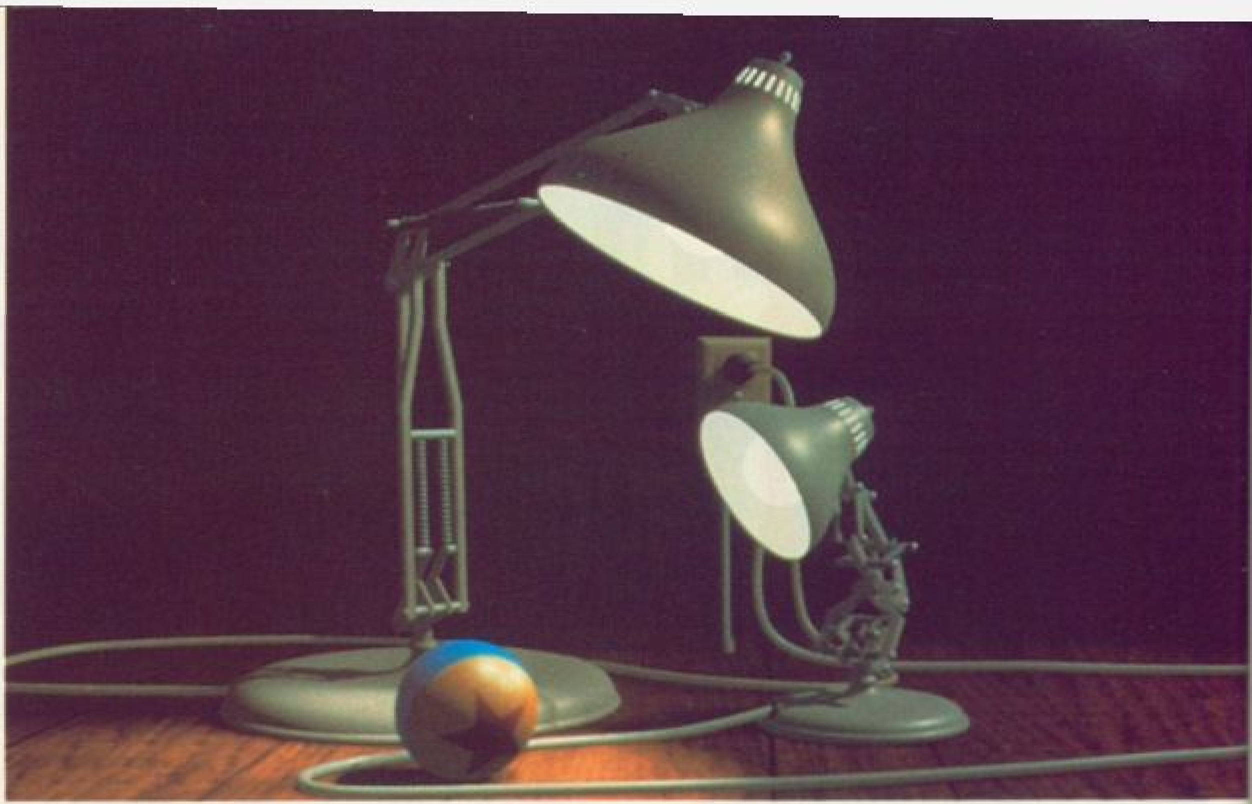
Laurence Scotford

Laurence was chosen from over 150 highly qualified applicants (including many familiar names in the games business) because, as the new Reviews Editor, he demonstrated to us all that he was not only a highly experienced games player, but also a superb organiser. Each month, he'll be coordinating reviewers from around the country (and even from abroad), bringing you the authoritative reviews you expect from Britain's leading games magazine.



Jim Willis

Now that we've got Jim as our Design Editor, we'll be ensuring each month that you not only get the best coverage, but that the design of the magazine also meets your demanding expectations. Jim's an expert in desktop publishing systems and is rapidly developing an individual style for the magazine using the latest state-of-the-art DTP technology. The way ACE is actually produced makes an interesting topic in itself: you'll be finding out more from Jim over the next few months as he lets you into some of his graphic secrets...



Luxo Jr. introduced several new technical achievements by Pixar's computer animation group, most notably, self-shadowing, where an object accurately projects shadows upon itself. The film was designed using a keyframe animation system with procedural animation assistance on a Digital Equipment VAX-11/750 computer and an Evans & Sutherland Picture System II. Final images were rendered with multiple light sources and procedural texturing on four Consoles Power 6/32 computers. © 1986 Pixar

Pushing the Boundaries

The 1989 International Bristol Animation Festival, extensively televised on Channel Four, acted as a showcase for the current state of the animated arts. Robert Myers went out West to meet up with Oscar-winning John Lasseter...

John Lasseter is an amiable Californian in his mid-thirties who, perhaps more than anyone, has been responsible for shaping the art of computer animation. No one familiar with computer graphics will have failed to have been impressed by the pioneering work by which he should be known as the Digital Disney. Indeed, Lasseter's remarkable track record is as big a testament to innovation in the art of entertainment as the master himself.

"One thing I've always tried really hard to do is to understand the limitations of computer graphics... when you understand those limits you can create something really good and use all the aspects of the medium. And also, once understood, you can start working to push those limitations further... but first you have to define the boundaries in order to push them."

And Lasseter has pushed them farther than most. *Luxo Jr.*, the much acclaimed, and much copied, short featuring two choreographed desk lamps, and *Red's Dream*, the solitary meanderings of a monocycle, proved that sophisticated animations could be generated by computers alone. Last year's *Tin Toy*, a comic encounter between a tin soldier and a giant baby, won him an Academy award for his efforts and his most recent work *Knickknack*, a tale of unrequiented love between a snowman and a plastic bikini-clad beauty, looks set to win him another. Both *Tin Toy* and *Knickknack* are instantly witty, ingenious and flawlessly executed, taking the viewer into compelling five-minute worlds of movie magic.

COMPUTER FRUSTRATION

But although Lasseter works with some of the most sophisticated computer animation systems available he's at pains to point out that for the time being computers are still not powerful enough to enable even an award-winning animator to work anywhere near as fast as he'd like.

"It's a little like working on a word processor and having to wait ten seconds for the line you've just typed to show up.. though it's slowly getting better, half the battle is learning to cope with frustration."

But one of the main changes he's witnessing in the production process of animation is the increasing cost-effectiveness provided by today's animation systems.

"It's now possible to do longer-format films... it used to be very prohibitive to do anything longer than about five minutes as it would take you six or seven months. Now we can do thirty minute films in a year or so... it seems computer technology is ever increasingly powerful for less and less money."

Part of that cost-effectiveness is supplied by the advent of personal computers which allow you to plan storyboards and time sequences without recourse to expensive on-line systems. Personal computers like the Apple Macintosh which come free with sophisticated animation packages. For Lasseter was in Bristol for a couple of days as the guest of Apple who were using the opportunity to showcase the Mac as the leading platform for computer animation. Indeed, Apple is so convinced of its machine's predominance in the field that it went so far as to co-sponsor the six day festival.

Pixar's *menu* modeling and animation software was used to create *Knickknack*, running on two workstations, each comprised of a Power 6/32 and PS350. The entire film was rendered using Pixar's rendering systems, implementing the RenderMan Interface for 3D scene description, employing such techniques as procedural shading and texturing, self-shadowing, motion blur and texture mapping. A Tekronix 3D Stereoscopic Display Monitor was used to preview the 3D frames. Final animation was recorded on an Agfa/Matrix analog film recorder. © 1989 Pixar

Knickknack was storyboarded entirely on a Mac II and Lasseter looks forward to the day when he can create high-end computer graphics on a Macintosh at home. The key to home animation on the Mac is the *HyperCard* package Apple bundle free with the machine. It's a mouse-driven application that enables an animator to create clickable buttons which drive sequences based on individual frames. A range of screen transitions and drawing tools, coupled with the ability to scan in digitised images, allows a user full control over motion control. If the duration of an event needs changing it's simply a question of inputting a new event time - the controlling software alters the frame rate accordingly and precise timing is ensured. Lasseter uses *HyperCard* in conjunction with a simple Thunderscan digitiser that clips to the head of his dot matrix printer. Xeroxed pictures can thus be scanned into *HyperCard* and easily manipulated and incorporated into animations using straightforward cut and paste facilities. The arrangement may be simple but the results are sufficiently good to have Lasseter hooked.

"*HyperCard* gives me a rough idea of the timing and story line... good enough so that the final product, translated on our custom systems, changes very little. *Knickknack* took only a week to be converted to story-board form."

EIGHTIES ART

Creating computer animations at home is, of course, strictly an eighties phenomenon. Hitherto, animation had always been the most labour intensive of the visual arts requiring immense patience and the peculiar skill of retaining the idea of perhaps breath-taking visual action with a snail's pace of execution. Part of the problem has been the differing requirements of foreground and background action. The latter is for the most part relatively static - acting as a mere stage for a complex whirl of character activity in the foreground. Early techno-animators seized on the possibilities of consigning the largely geometric functions of backgrounds to the controlling computer software. Foreground or character action demanded more organic or natural movement and therefore remained firmly within the province of hand-drawn animation.

***Tin Toy* was the first computer animated film to ever win an Oscar, and was Pixar's first work to feature the animation of a human character. To accomplish this a 3D model of the baby's body was digitised from clay figures and merged with a skeletal description of the character. Special software fitted the body model to animation of the skeleton, so that the body moved and flexed according to the animator's directions. The animation of the baby's facial expression required the definition of more than 40 facial muscles which were grouped by function to allow the animator better control of facial expression. Animation of the wind-up toy was augmented through the use of procedural animation and dynamics techniques. Computation of the final colour images was performed using Pixar's rendering systems, implementing the RenderMan Interface for 3D scene description. The film utilised such techniques as procedural shading, self-shadowing, motion blur and texture mapping. © 1988 Pixar**

For Lasseter, computers introduced a means of supplying a technical leap forward bordering on the revolutionary.

"I started work at Disney after graduating and I saw some rushes from a film they were making at the time... and I thought THIS IS IT. I saw this tremendous potential to expand animation... to get computers to do the backgrounds and use traditional hand animation for the foregrounds."

The movie was *Tron* and it was to change John Lasseter from a mere team member on the latest Mickey's *Christmas Carol* to an Oscar-winning innovator with perhaps the most advanced animation company in the world. Within weeks he'd completed a thirty second test called *Wild Things* which Lucasfilm's Computer Graphics Group got wind of and he was away.

Surprisingly, Lasseter's always written his computer animation control software in the UNIX programming environment normally thought of as the language of networking. But the reasons historical rather than rational – all the Hollywood animators and special effect divisions were using VAXs and UNIX was the order of the day. But while the Disney's and Lucasfilms of this world went on to move into the Cray XMP SuperLeague, Lasseter joined up with a handful of Lucasfilm buddies and formed Pixar, a company devoted to extending the art of animation through custom hardware, software and endless imagination.

"We use all our own software running on powerful Computer Consoles UNIX machines and our own Pixar Image Computer... dedicated animation hardware. For the modeling we use an Evans and Sutherland Picture System 350 - this is a vector machine that can see things in wire frame in real time. Once we have our models and animation worked out we bring in our own rendering software Pixar's RenderMan - and fill all the colour, texture, lighting and reflection. Sometimes it's appropriate to use models as sources so we digitise organic shapes we've made from clay.. like the baby in *Tin Toy*.. and incorporate them into the modeling systems. But for wholly geometric shapes, like all the characters in *Knickknack* and *Luxo Jr.*, we use our modeling systems."

A number of scenes in *Red's Dream* were rendered with procedural texturing techniques, self-shadowing, and motion blur, and in some cases, particle systems. Frames for the film were computed on a Pixar Image Computer and two Power 6/32's. Animation was created using another Power 6/32 and an PS350 running Pixar's own keyframe animation system supplemented by procedural animation software. © 1987 Pixar

Lasseter also points out that regardless of the hardware you have at hand, the key to effective animation of human characters is good observation.

"For the baby in *Tin Toy* I shot nine hours of my nephew's baby just sat doing various things on various days and spent I don't know how long replaying the sequences to get a feel for how babies behave."

WHAT NEXT?

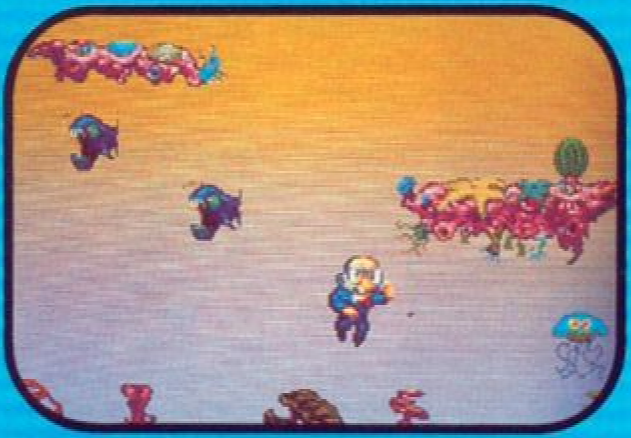
Indeed, Pixar's strength is in character work, whether it's babies terrorising tin soldiers or snowmen using pneumatic drills to escape from glass bubbles to pool-side parties, and it's shortly signing a deal with Collossal Pictures to produce feature length films employing a mix of live and animated techniques. In between times, Lasseter is looking to produce some half-hour TV specials but he wants to return to his original notion of producing hand-drawn characters on computerised backgrounds.

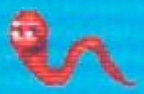
"There are certain things that computers are unable to do... you can only get real organic shapes to move organically through hand-animation but for applications where geometry and perspective are required computers are more than ideal, they're essential. We have to try and combine the best of both worlds."

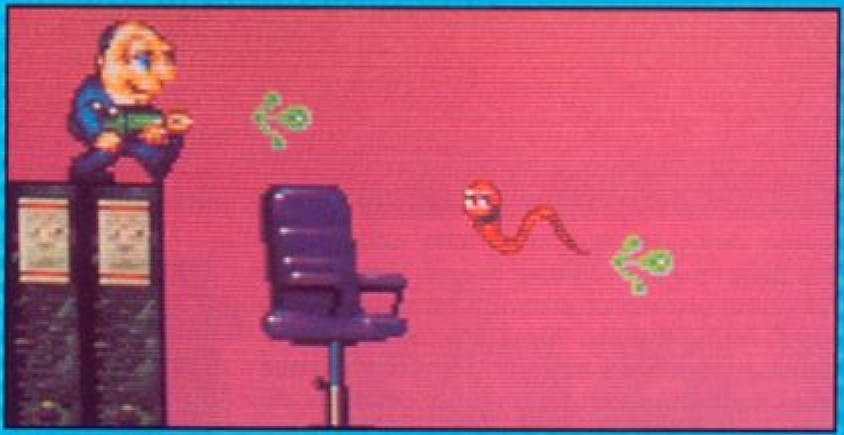
Having just completed *Knickknack*, Lasseter's just about to start working on a few TV commercials. First off is a thirty second ad for Tropicana orange juice shortly to be followed by one for an as yet unnamed chocolate company. It seems that even the most famous artists have to pay the rent, but then commercials are where the money is. For sophisticated animations that can cost up to $6000 a second, you need it!

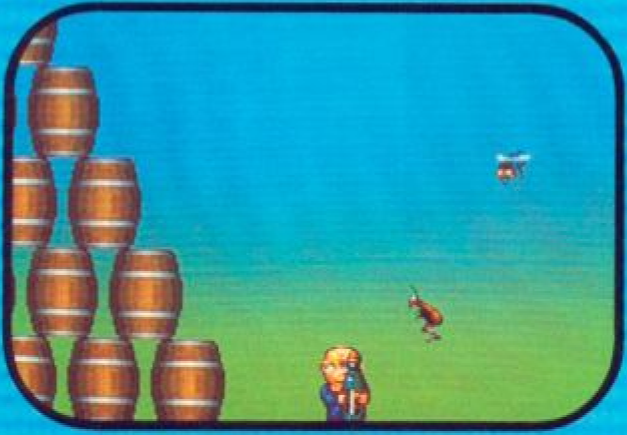
DYNAMIC DEBUGGER™

THE ULTIMATE IN PEST CONTROL!



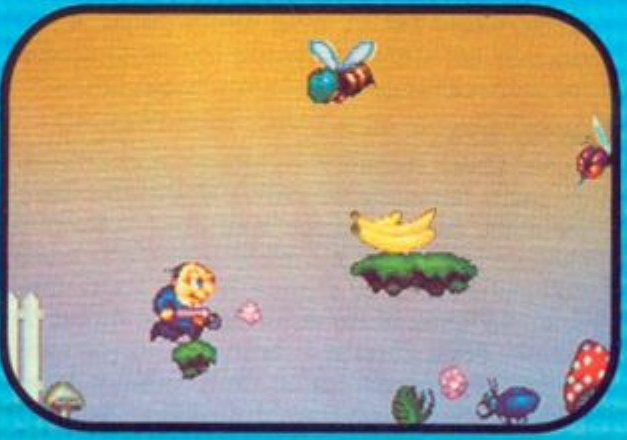


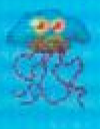


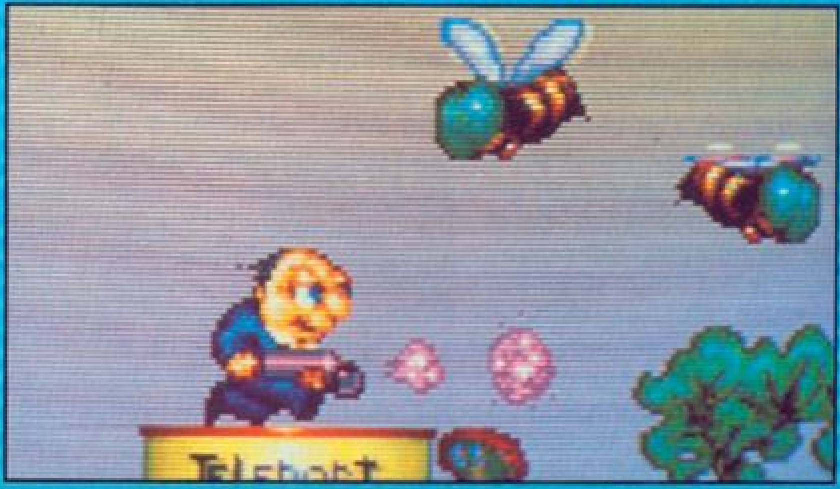


GET THEM BEFORE THEY GET YOU!

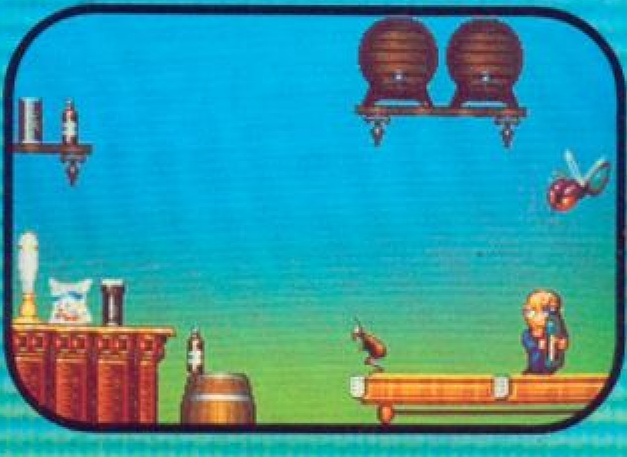
DYNAMIC DEBUGGER – Spray your way through 10 bug-infested worlds on your quest to attain the ultimate accolade from the elders of Shoggle Waggle – Licenced Dynamic Debugger!
GASP at the incredible graphics – over 4,000 colours on screen in the world's first moving Hold And Modify game (Amiga only). But don't stand gawping for too long – there's a job to be done!
Wipe out the insectoid pests with a variety of wild 'n' whacky weapons, including a cork-firing champagne bottle, a vacuum cleaner, a DDT gun and a battery!







SCREEN SHOTS FROM AMIGA VERSION



AVAILABLE SOON
ON AMIGA

© 1989 MIRRORSOFT LIMITED

Dynamic Debugger was designed and produced by Interactive Pixels. Commodore Amiga version programmed by Andy Reece and Jon Knox. Graphics and cover illustration by Pete Lyon. Music arranged by Anthony Ellis. Not for distribution to the Republic of South Africa.

image works

IMAGE WORKS IRWIN HOUSE 118 SOUTHWARK STREET LONDON SE1 0SW TELEPHONE: 01 928 1454 FAX: 01 583 3494

SCREEN TEST

PIC CURVE POWER

The PIC – Predicted Interest Curve – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around. Here's why...

The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. But this tells you an awful lot than just what your interest level will be at any given time (although that's obviously important in itself)...

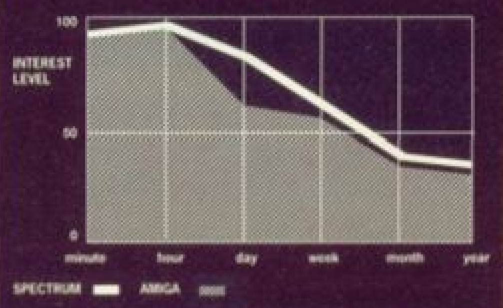
For example, a high one minute rating means that the game must look fantastic and get you all excited from the word go. That means it's probably a good game to show off to the neighbours – after all, they probably aren't going to pay attention for much more than a minute, after which they'll go back to drinking coffee and making rude remarks about 'those awful hostile games the boys play these days'.

The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot about a game too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into – not recommended if you like to get down to something quick and easy. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.

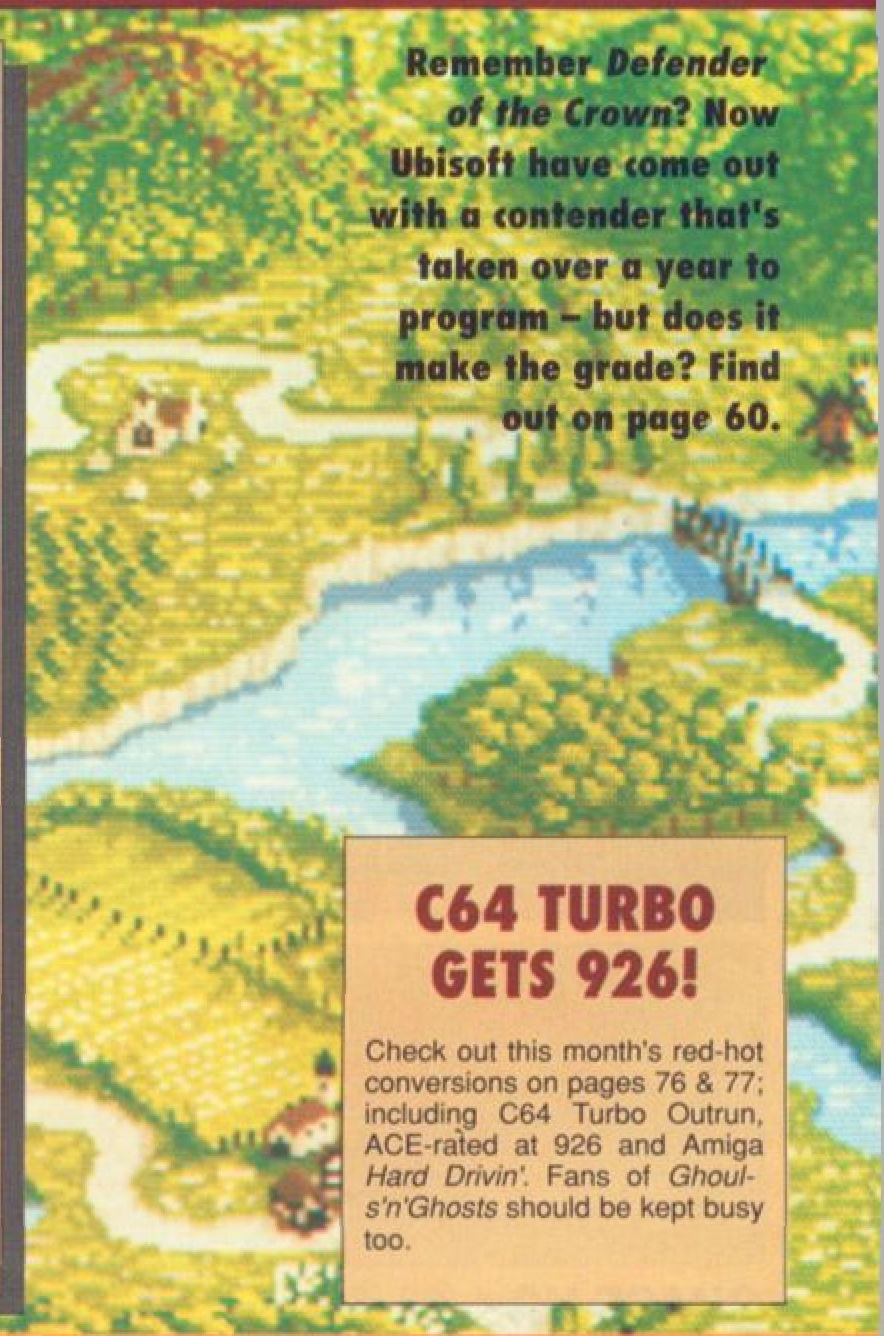
Finally, you've got the month and year ratings. The better a game holds up here the more deserving it is of your hard earned cash.

PIC curve construction takes a lot of playing on the part of ACE reviewers. PIC curve analysis is an art in itself. The reward is knowing just what you're getting when you make the decision to splash out on *Mutant Macdonald Gettysburgers*....or *Chaos Strikes Back*, this month's ACE-rated shining example of 16-bit playability.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



PICs give you more than a rating – they represent the entire life of a game...yes SIR!



Remember *Defender of the Crown*? Now Ubisoft have come out with a contender that's taken over a year to program – but does it make the grade? Find out on *page 60*.

C64 TURBO GETS 926!

Check out this month's red-hot conversions on pages 76 & 77; including C64 Turbo Outrun, ACE-rated at 926 and Amiga *Hard Drivin'*. Fans of *Ghouls'n'Ghosts* should be kept busy too.

THE ACE REVIEWING SYSTEM

PIC CURVES
This unique feature to the ACE reviewing system charts the interest level that a game stimulates over a period of time. The curve is accompanied by a comment to explain why it's the shape it is. Find out more in the Pic Curve Power panel on this page...

Each review also carries special 'Version Boxes' that give you details of the game's implementation on a specific machine. These boxes include ratings for...

GRAPHICS
All aspects of the game's graphics with the limitations of each machine taken into account. A good-looking Spectrum game will therefore score higher than an average-looking Amiga one.

AUDIO
The music and sound effects are rated here. A high rating is possible on even limited machines like the Spectrum and PC if the computer's shortcomings are cleverly sidestepped.

IQ FACTOR
Yes, sometimes you have to use your brain. This rating evaluates the risk of mental effort – which some people actually enjoy...Note that ACE readers are generally reckoned to be more intelligent than other human beings, so the ratings may be lower than you expect...

FUN FACTOR
Basically a measure of mindless addictiveness. Games like *Arkanoid* and *Flying Shark* require virtually zero brain power but are still remarkably addictive. Most coin-ops score well here because they are designed for instant satisfaction. Games don't have to be *either* fun or intelligent – they can be both.

ACE RATING
This is not just plucked out of the air but is calculated from the area under the PIC Curve. To get a really high rating a game will not only have to be very addictive but stand the test of time as well. Just because a game does not get over 900 does not mean we are not recommending it – the following is a general guide to what the ratings mean.

900+ A classic game, recommended without reservation.

800-899 A superb game, but perhaps lacking the long-term depth to last into the month and year categories.

700-799 Still highly recommended, but probably has a couple of aspects to the gameplay that take the edge off it.

600-699 The 'fair' zone, where it tends to be very good 'if you like that sort of thing'.

500-599 This still has good things going for it, but the game clearly has some noticeable problems.

400-499 Problems with gameplay and programming make this an inferior game.

300-399 Not only is the gameplay bad but the design was probably flawed in the first place.

200-299 Things are getting really serious now...

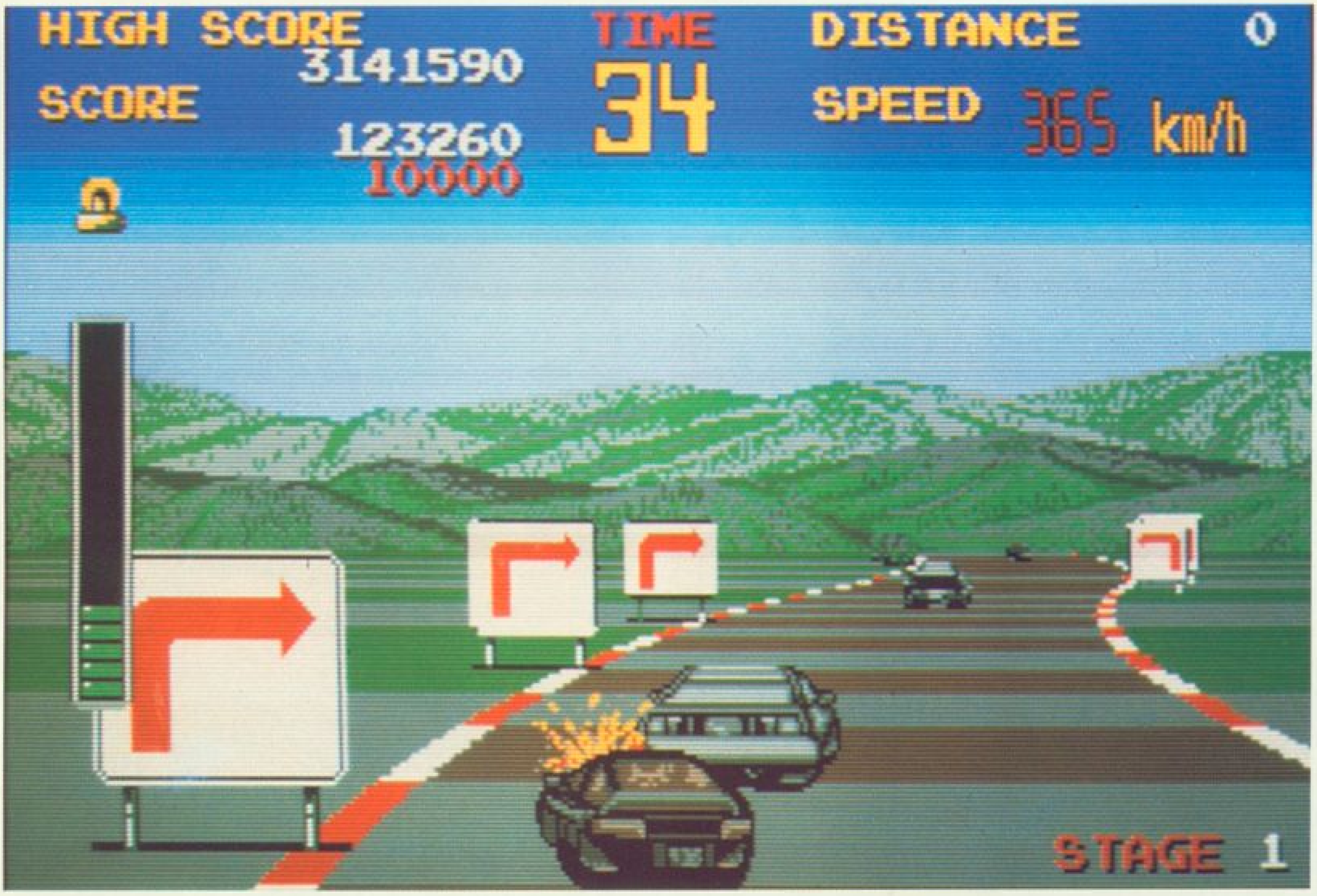
100-199 ZX81 games running on an Amiga.

Under 100 Nothing has ever achieved this appalling level of rating. If anything ever does, it wouldn't even be worth having it for free.

VERSION BOXES
This covers version-specific information on graphics, audio, loading problems etc. If there's no box for your machine but a version is planned, it'll be covered as an update in a later issue.

THE TEAM
Laurence Scotford is ACE's new Reviews Editor – Laurence has been playing games since he was a nipper, but some of them we probably ought not to mention. There was hot competition for the ACE Reviews Editor position from gamesters all over the country, but Laurence pipped them all at the post by showing that he could not only push a game to its limit, but he could push a pen too and tell you all about it.
Steve Cooke, one of the original editors of this award-winning magazine, known to thousands through his many other previous identities, including Zzap!'s White Wizard, The Pilgrim, and Old Baldy.
Rik Haynes was Reviews Editor on Britain's biggest selling computer weekly and has been hooked on computer games since spotting a *Space Invaders* machine in the corner of a pub in Southend-on-Sea back in '78. Rik's views are renowned for being hard-hitting and often outspoken...
Eugene Lacey is the man who put Britain's top-selling games magazine, C&VG, on the map. Luckily for us, Eugene got fed up with writing for 8-year olds and decided the time had come to tackle the challenge of ACE magazine. As one of Britain's most experienced games journalists, his word is LAW.

We don't review anything until we are 100% certain that we've got it right. We've checked them out thoroughly – now you can too.



CHASE HQ

OCEAN outrun the field in a hard drivin' Christmas race

CHASE HQ is dead simple. Put your foot down, catch up with the criminals, and keep ramming their car until it bursts into flames and you can apprehend them. That's all there is to it.

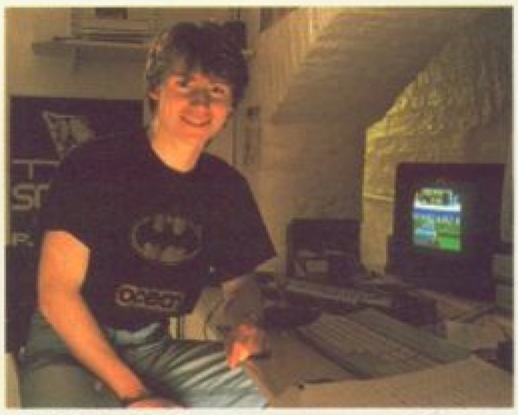
But if *Chase HQ* is simple to learn – how to play it is not nearly as simple to master. Most people will catch the first criminal after a few attempts but this is only the beginning. The next four are much better drivers, have faster vehicles, and the clock ticks away constantly – giving you just one short minute to catch them and inflict sufficient damage to stop them.

The simplicity of *Chase HQ* comes as something of a surprise. After all the hype and the buzz that proceeded it as being 'the' arcade conversion of 1989 you kind of expected it to have more features. All you have to do is catch up with the baddies, bump into them a few times, and apprehend them on behalf of the forces of law and order. No power-ups (apart from a booster), no finicky tectical decisions: just plain playability all the way.

The basic simplicity of *Chase* is compensated for by the briefing screens and the graphical displays at the end of each mission.

The briefings are particularly neat. A screen display shows a message print out from Nancy at HQ who tells you about the next criminal to be apprehended and shows you a photo of his car.

The end level screens are pretty impressive as well – showing your patrol car stopped in front of the criminals' vehicle with the villain


'Jobbie' O'Brien, programmer of Spectrum *Chase HQ*

AMIGA VERSION

Superb use of sound FX – great throaty growls as you pass the other cars on the road, screeches of breaks, and roar of engine as the gears shift and the Porsche accelerates. Graphics are fairly basic – the other cars on the road being particularly disappointing. No complaints about the speed or animation though. It fairly motors along and has a noticeable poke forward when you press space to engage the turbo power.

GRAPHICS	**7**	**IQ FACTOR**	**6**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 840

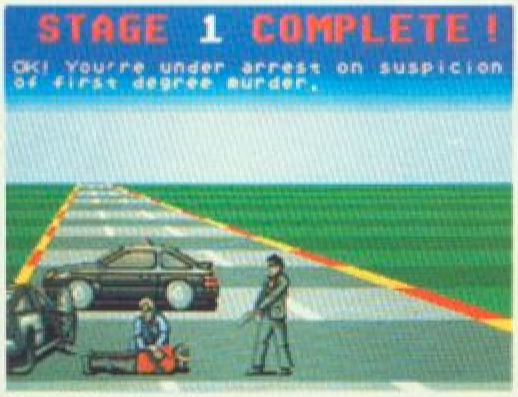
SPECTRUM VERSION

Spectrum *Chase HQ* is really fast – thanks to the programming talents of John 'Jobbie' O'Brien (see page 84 for further info). All the neat touches of the coin-op are included, such as the helicopter showing you the way and your car engine's sound changing when you enter a tunnel. One of the best Spectrum racers around.

GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**6**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 868

◄Bumper to bumber in Amiga *Chase HQ*...



STAGE 1 COMPLETE!

OK! Youre under arrest on suspicion of first degree murder.

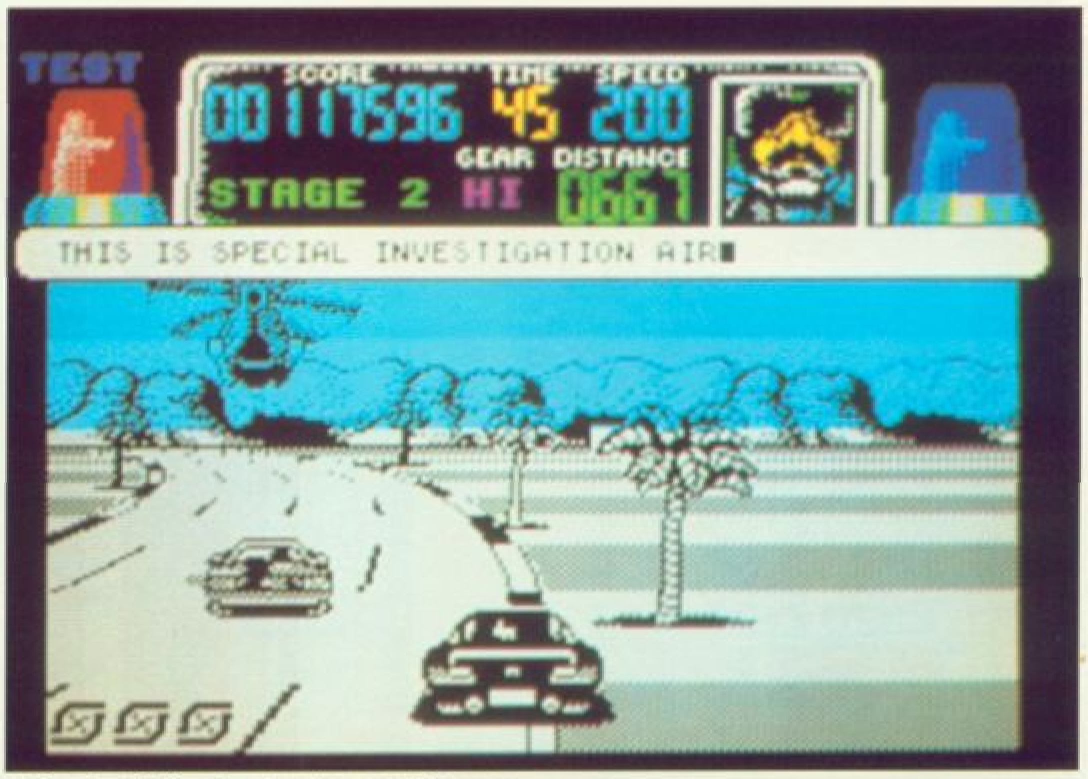
Book him Dano!

lying on the road in handcuffs.

Getting to those end-level screens is largely a matter of perfecting your control techniques. Although you only have two gears – high and low – mastering them is the key to success in *Chase*. By switching down you can right the car's position when it is about to spin out on a particularly difficult bend. This loses you speed, but of course not as much as if you span right off the track.

Chase also features plenty of graphical frills in the game itself – like the flashing light on top of your Porsche that starts blinking when the criminal car comes into view.

Chase is challenging and good fun. It will also have you tearing your hair out in frustration at certain points – for example, running out of time just before you make the final ram on a criminal vehicle to make it pull up. You know how many hits you need to get by the pile of tyres that fill up in a grid that appears to the left of the screen. When the grid is completely full the criminal car will pull up and you can make your arrest.



THIS IS SPECIAL INVESTIGATION AIR

Using the helicopter to show you the way

Chase HQ was enormously popular in the arcades and will undoubtedly prove just as big a hit on home machines. The gameplay may be a bit limited for some tastes – tastes that prefer a *Stunt Car* or *Vette* type of a challenge for example – but for those of you who prefer your racing pure and simple, with a touch of motor way stock car jostling thrown in, it is perfect. Fans of the coin-op should have no hesitation.

● Eugene Lacey

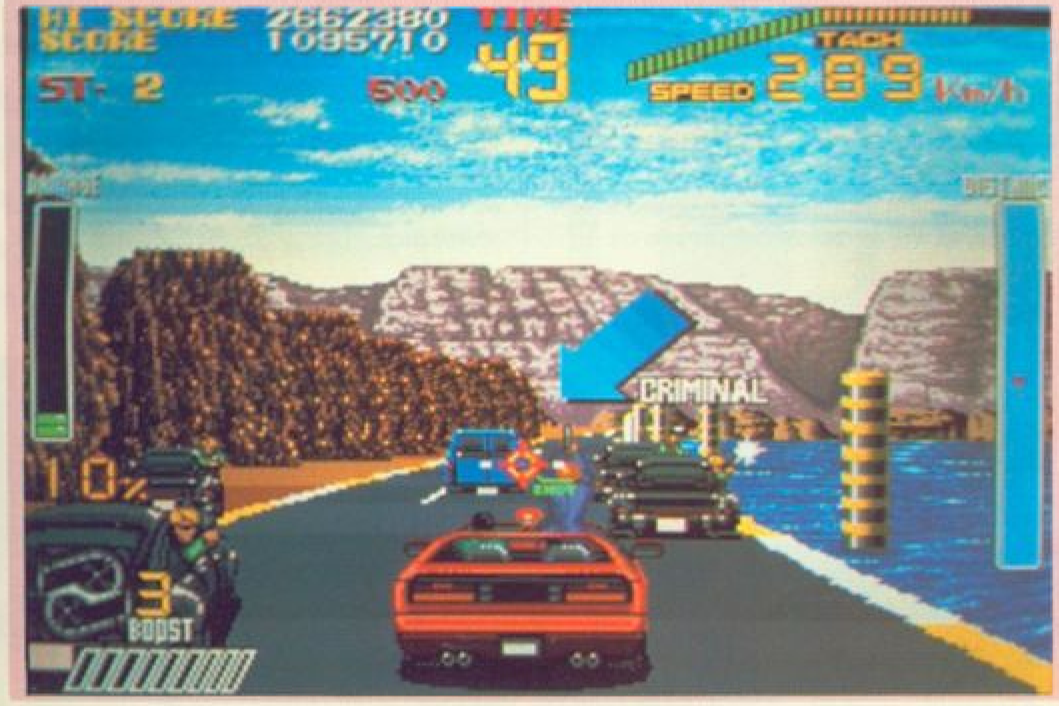
...AND CHASE HQ 2?

Ocean have yet to confim if they will be converting *Chase HQ II – Special Criminal Investigation*. If its arcade performance is anything to judge by it seems likely as the game is doing particularly well right now. It is easy to see why.

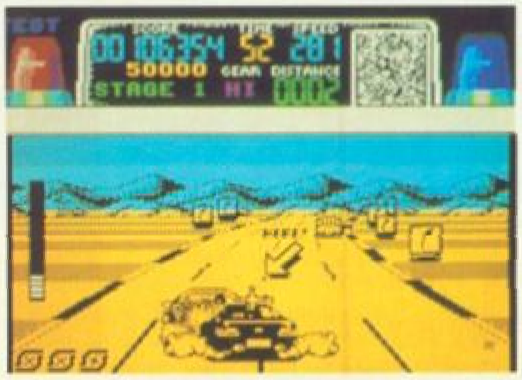
Special Criminal Investigation takes the same basic idea of *Chase HQ* – catch up with criminal cars and apprehend them. But this time it is not necessary to ram the baddies' cars to make them crash, instead you can pop up out your sun roof and take pot shots at them with your pistol instead.

The gameplay has been further embellished with the addition of several power-ups dropped out of the sky by the police chopper. Extra weapons, fuel; and communications equipment greatly enhance the game play. Much more to do and therefore double the fun.

Upright and sit down versions of *Special Criminal Investigation* are in your local arcade now at about 50p a go. Start the countdown for a conversion...

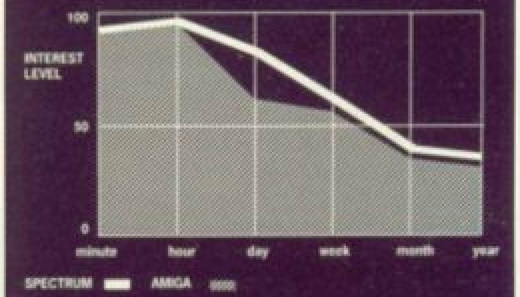


RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£19.99dk	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
SPEC 128	£9.99cs	OUT NOW
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs	IMMINENT



Burning some serious rubber

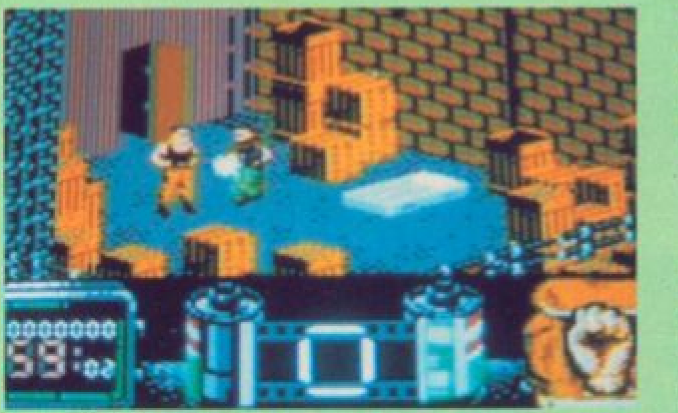
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Novel chase and crash racer – but lacking the long term challenge and appeal of *Stunt Car*

VENDETTA

SYSTEM 3 exact their revenge on 16-bit cynics



Our hero. He's unarmed and vulnerable at the moment, but once he's found a weapon he can start biting back

A typical baddie. He's armed and dangerous – the colour of his trousers gives a clue to just how dangerous (no kidding)!

These crates may well be hiding some useful items. On first entering a room, any objects will flash briefly to help you locate them

The wrist watch counts down the time remaining as well as showing your score. The green band indicates your remaining energy

The film shows all of the objects you are carrying, forming a sort of scrolling visual inventory

The rucksack shows the object you are currently using. A fist means hand to hand combat

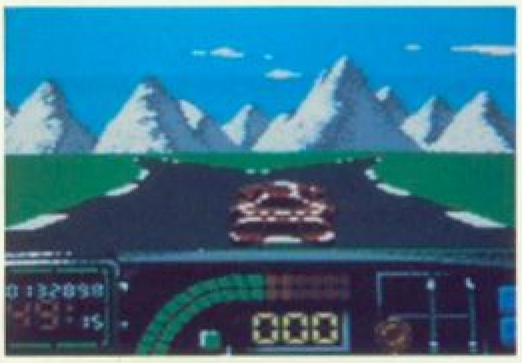
IN last month's issue we looked at the 8-bit versions of *Myth* from System 3, and we were suitably impressed. Why were we so excited by the product? For two very good reasons. Firstly, in the face of increasing cynicism from 16-bit users who believe that 8-bit machines are rapidly heading the way of the dodo, System 3 have seen fit to continue their development of original games on those same 8-bit formats. Secondly, the resulting product is as good, if not better, than a lot of the so called 'advanced' software being churned out for the likes of the ST and Amiga. Now System 3 are close to the completion of *Vendetta*, a game that has been developed for the C64, and once again proves that 8-bit technology is far from dead.

The game is based around the theoretically possible development of an atomic weapon that could be constructed by anyone able to lay their hands on the necessary plutonium. In the game scenario, the professor who has succeeded in designing such a weapon has been kidnapped, along with his daughter, by a terrorist organisation. Your task, as a vigilante, is to rescue the professor and his daughter. Because of your status, however, not only do you have to deal with the terrorists, you must also keep the over zealous police force convinced that you are on the side of law and order, and not just out to make a quick buck. To this end, you must collect weapons and other useful items to assist you in your task, as well as accumulating the necessary pieces of evidence with which to corroborate your story.

The game begins with an extremely sexy title sequence in which you are shown a video of the kidnap – this sets the scene for the game. The sequence is accompanied by a superbly atmospheric soundtrack put together by Matt Grey.

Sound good so far? Well, it get's better. What you get in *Vendetta* is two games in one. In half of the sections you must explore areas rendered in glorious 3D, in which you have complete freedom to move in front of, or behind objects, as well as picking up and dropping items, and interacting with the characters you encounter (which usually means bumping them off before they do the same thing with you.) It is at this point you will begin to wonder if your C64 hasn't metamorphasised into an Amiga overnight – yes, the graphics are that impressive!

The second section of the game is a driving simulation, again in 3D. This was still being developed when ACE took a look at *Vendetta*, but it looks good so far. You not only have to keep yourself on the road, but also contend with the villains' car, police cars, and obstacles. Unlike some other driving simulations we could mention, this one features a properly implemented fork in the road, as well as dips and hills and so on.



You begin in a deserted warehouse, and have just an hour to complete the game, so the action gets pretty frantic at times. You are soon beset by terrorists, and they're not the sort to stop and ask questions, they just come straight at you. It is here that the full 360° movement comes in handy, especially the ability to run backwards while firing a weapon (assuming you have one that is). Even if you do manage to find a gun, you still need to acquire some ammo before it is of any use. A weapon of some sort soon becomes essential, as most of the later terrorists are armed.

It's up to you now to find the car, and then go on to rescue the girl and her father. However well you do, we're sure that you'll find *Vendetta* as impressive as we did. Look out for a full review soon.

TEAM EFFORT

When we talked to System 3 about *Vendetta* it quickly became apparant that this project has been very much a team effort – everyone has had their say and thrown in ideas so that the product has been constantly evolving to a stage that is far from it's original conception.

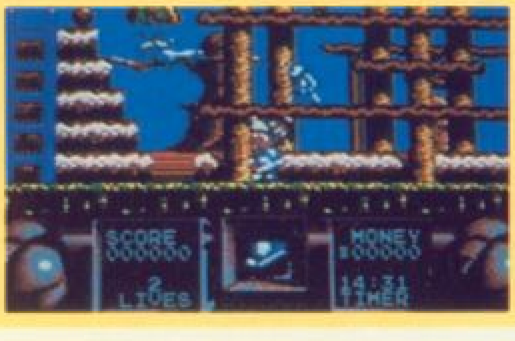
The resulting game is large. Everything has been tightly compressed, and yet the 64's memory is still used completely down to the last byte. The tremendous graphics have been supplied by Dokk and Tony Hagar (System 3's in-house man, currently working on the graphics for the ST version of *Myth*). Meanwhile Maniacs of Noise have been squeezing as much power as they can out of the sound generating hardware on the SID chip, in order to provide suitable gunshots, explosions, and grunts.

The man behind the coding is C64 supremo Stan Schembri. He has been developing *Vendetta* on System 3's PC running *Programmer's Development System* for the 6502, alongside a 64C with an *Expert* cartridge.

For this project, Stan has avoided a heavy reliance on the C64s hardware. The hardware sprites are used, but they have to be masked to achieve the game's 3D aspect. The remaining graphics are all handled by complex software graphic drivers. These combine the sprites with bit-mapped graphics and vector line drawing to produce the final effect – and very good it looks too.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT

Here's a quick peek at the little offering that System 3 plan to deliver after *Vendetta*. This colourful number is codenamed *Flimbo's Quest* at the moment, although it may well appear under a different name when it finally hits the streets. ACE was lucky enough to get a glimpse of this when we visited System 3 recently and it looks very tasty indeed. It's a new platform game with more than the usual dose of cuteness. Want to know more? 'Course you do. So watch out for further details on *Flimbo's Quest* in ACE soon.



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– ACE rated 952 – Advanced Computer Entertainment.

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'F-16 Combat Pilot pulls out all the stops'
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F-16
COMBAT PILOT

I'm primed for action as my F-16 leaves the runway. This time my mission is to destroy a battalion of tanks. Suddenly, threat warning – interceptors closing fast! I quickly select dogfight mode and arm a Sidewinder. We both fire at the same time – chaff and a high-g turn out manoeuvres his missile. A loud explosion tells me he's not so lucky.

Flying fast and low, I turn my F-16 towards my target. Time to switch on the ground radar and arm the laser-guided Mavericks. I fire six missiles in quick succession, Lantirn automatically locking on to each tank. With flak bursting around me I dive for cover and head for home. Approaching base, I contact the tower and request a talkdown for my night landing.

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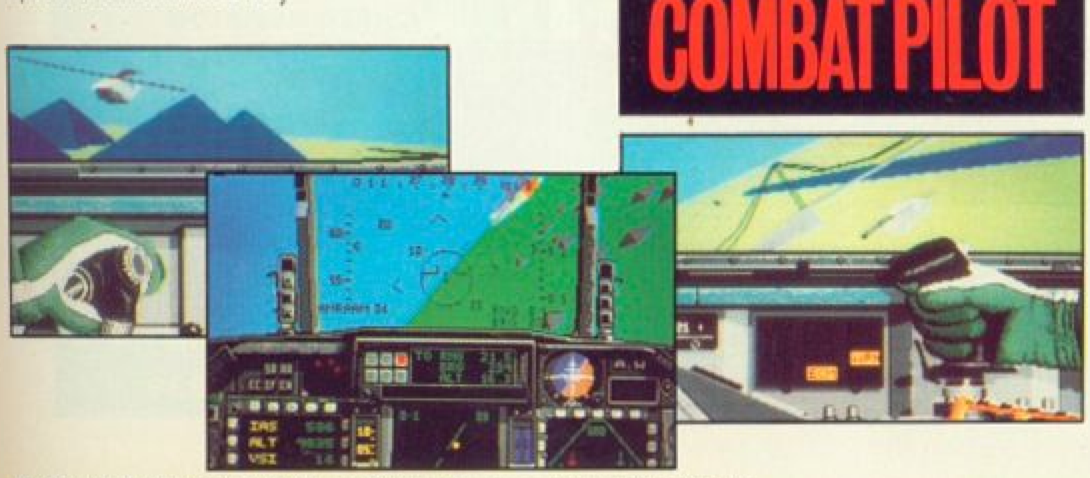

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X-OUT

ACE
RATED
939
ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

RAINBOW ARTS cross out the competition

IREM are currently at the head of the shoot-em-up technology revolution with two of the best blasters to hit the arcades in '89: *Dragon's Breed*, and *X-Multiply* – the sequel to *R-Type*.

Apart from larger screens, faster processors and superior graphics, these two games also feature far more sophisticated use of power ups. Certain of them can be used remotely (e.g. you can send pseudo ships off to perform mini missions for you) and their selection and use needs careful thought.

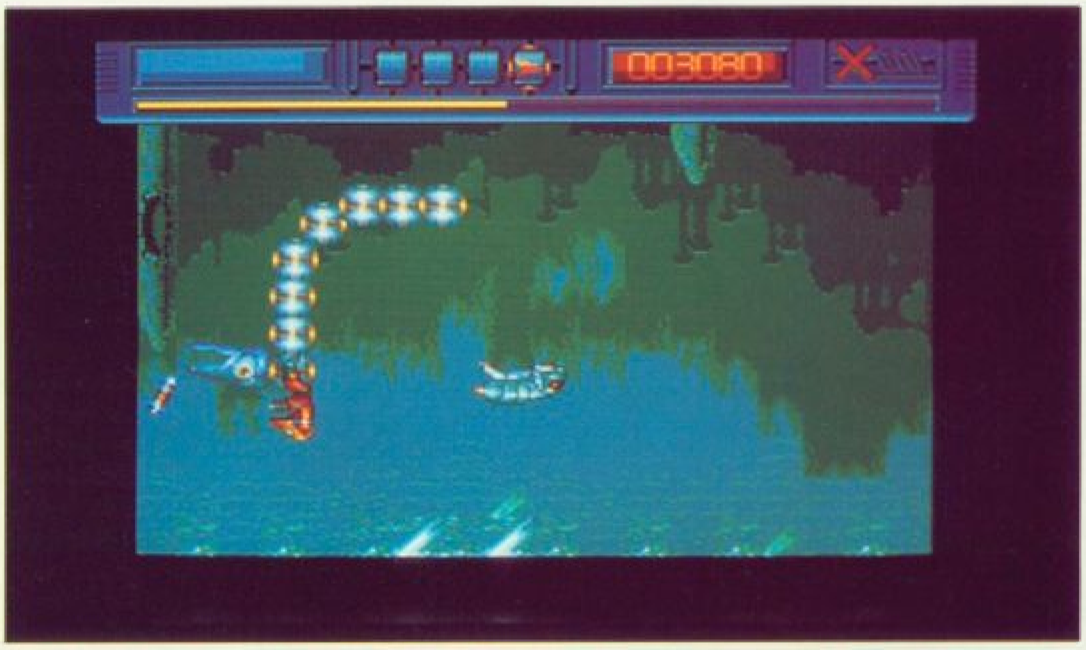
However what really makes these games so successful is the design of the gameplay : flight paths of aliens have to be carefully analysed, huge aliens need to be destroyed piece by piece, and a varying of pace throughout the mission are typical hallmarks of careful design.

X-Out is the first home version to emulate this new style of coin-op and provides proof that on 16bit, at least, homebrews are catching up with the arcades. To illustrate the point let us say that *Xenon II* is probably on a par with some of the better shoot 'em ups coming out of the arcade developers around about 1985-6. X-Out, on the other hand, has the definite look of some of the very latest games currently in the arcades – albeit not as fast, pretty, or loud. But in design terms X-Out has its roots firmly in *Dragon's Breed*, *X-Multiply*, and *R-Type*.

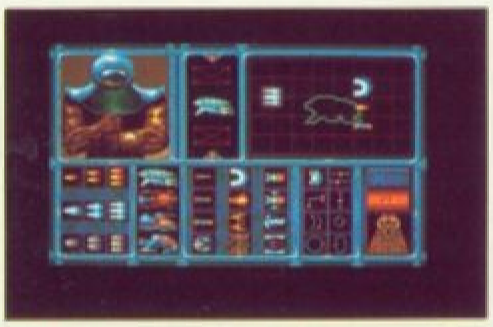
Rainbow Arts are traditionally eclectic in their designs – and apart from the overall feel of an Irem style game *X-Out* also has one or two features that are copied straight from the Irem games. The flying, multi-segmented serpent with a laser-toting alien on its back looks very *Dragon's Breed*, and the rotating balls and multiplying worms on level four look straight out of *R-Type*.

But don't let any of this put you off (as if it would!). The fact that *X-Out* can look and play like an Irem coin-op is the highest praise you could possibly level at any shoot 'em up and this particular one has plenty of original ideas of its own as well.

The action takes place under water where you have to fight your way through eight progressively difficult levels – sorting out the end of level nasty at the end of each one before progressing to the next. Nothing particularly wondrous about that. What sets *X-Out* apart is the weaponry. You have a choice of four ships which you can arm with no less than a choice of twenty six different weapons. The arming screen is called the shop – where you purchase your additional weaponry with the points you have earned by shooting out aliens in the previous levels.



Backdrops aren't spectacular in *X-Out*. It's what you can't see that counts: gameplay.



The comprehensive weapon selection screen.

Just about every possible taste has been catered for in the emporium of power-ups. There are multi-directional missiles, long rasping lasers, flame throwers, quick fire machine guns, homing missiles, thin lasers, fat lasers, and rotating satellites.

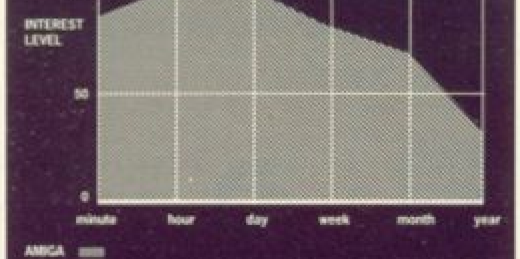
The temptation is to grab 'em all at once and let rip – but the game sensibly prevents you from doing this due to the purchase system. As in Psygnosis' *Blood Money* you only have a certain number of points to start with and if you bolt on too much expensive weaponry you will only be able to afford one ship. Novices are therefore better advised to wait until they have earned a good few points before reaching for the deluxe power-ups.

The backgrounds of the eight levels are not spectacular. Static, with little detail. But this doesn't matter a jot as the aliens, mid level and end level nasties are so stunning that all of your concentration is registered on them.

X-Out is going to please a lot of gamers. The carrot of selecting and purchasing the wide variety of weapons is irresistible and there is so much on screen at any one time, so much movement and colour that the game is a real visual delight. This is definitely one of the best shoot 'em ups produced so far. I would rate it on a par with the PC Engine version of *R-Type* and ahead of things like *Katakis* and *Xenon II*.

● Eugene Lacey

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Enough raw entertainment value to keep you coming back for more – even after you have bested its eighth and final level.

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AMIGA VERSION

The Amiga is working over time to produce all of the graphics and moving objects that are on screen – over fifty of them at certain points. There is a price to be payed for this in the shape of the inordinate amount of time it takes to load and an occasional shuddering and 'slow motion' effect when the computer becomes crammed with too many instructions.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**5**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**9**

ACE RATING 939

CONFLICT

VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC's Middle East Political Simulation

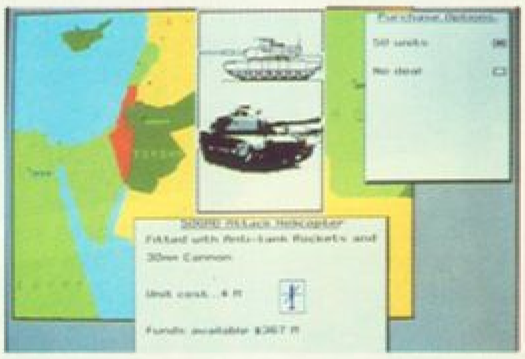
JUST as Glasnost and Perestroika had persuaded you that world peace might start breaking out all over, the death threat issued by the Ayatollah against Salman Rushdie should have reminded you that there remain serious differences of outlook between nations. In *Conflict*, however, you have the chance to add a little stability to the world's political arena.

You are thrown in at the deep end – as the newly elected Prime Minister of Israel in the year 1997. Your ultimate objective is to cause the downfall of the four neighbouring states – Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon – while keeping Israel both politcally stable and intact as a seperate state.

Each game turn is a month and is divided into three phases. The first phase is a review of the major headlines that month. This keeps you up-to-date with events as well as providing some indication of how the rest of the world views your activities. You are also given the opportunity of saving the game at this point.

In the second phase you deal with diplomatic and intelligence affairs. This can often involve patching up relations openly with a country, while at the same time undermining its political stability by supporting an insurgent group working from the inside.

The third phase is the most crucial one. This is where you must purchase arms, review your nuclear program, and sort out any little problems with your neighbours.


Purchase Options
50 units
No deal
Attack Helicopter
Fitted with Anti-tank Rockets and
30mm Cannon
Unit cost... 4 M
Funds available $367 M

The game is played via a series of menus. The options available in each menu are dependent on the current situation. At each stage of the game you receive reports from relevant people and you must then make a selection from the actions open to you. The game is not played in real-time (compressed or otherwise) so you have long enough to ponder carefully before making your decisions.

Conflict does not really have much visual impact, and at first the gamesplay seems limited. Furthermore, this sort of game has been around for years (remember *Dictator*?); it's age, however, is perhaps testimony to its success and *Conflict* is even more absorbing and accessible as its ancestors because of its frightening air of possibility. It may not be a full-blooded political simulation, but for a fiver it's hard to beat. If all the new 16-Blitz budget titles are as good as this, they'll be money very well spent.

● Laurence Scotford

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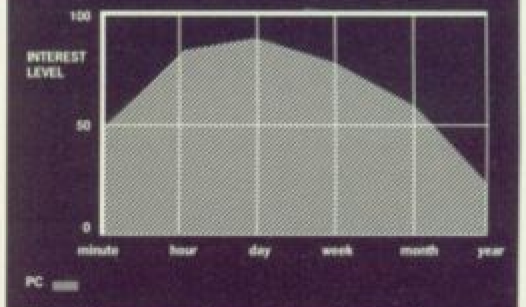
PC VERSION

The CGA version is... well... monochrome really. If you've got EGA you are treated to a bit of colour in the maps. To be honest though, it doesn't make a hell of a lot of difference either way. If you have a mouse installed you can use it to select the menu options, but the cursor keys are quick enough. Not the most exciting game of 1989, but very absorbing – and at this price you can't go wrong!

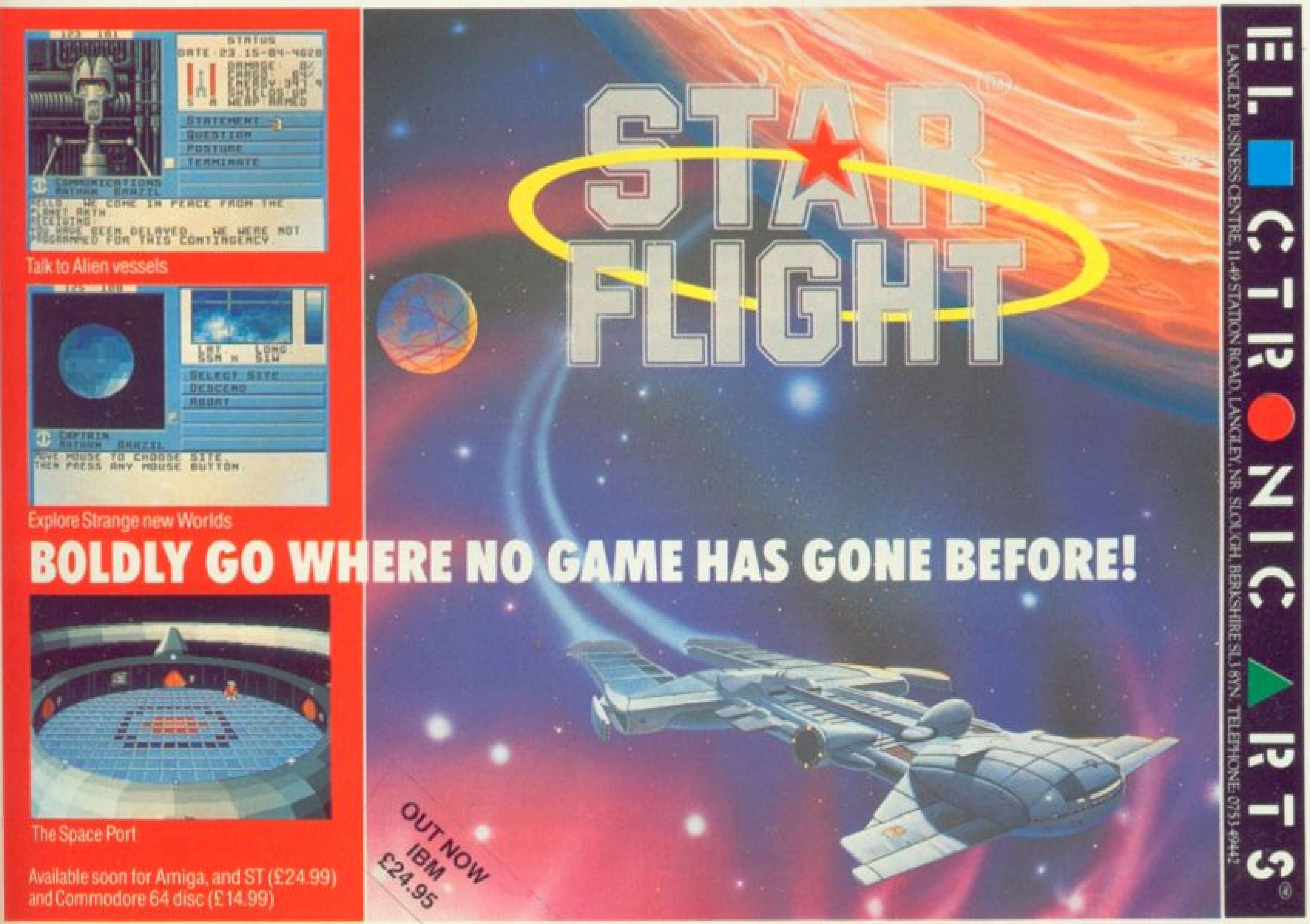
GRAPHICS	**4**	**IQ FACTOR**	**7**
AUDIO	**N/A**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 850

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Should keep you happy for a few weeks



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OPERATION THUNDERBOLT

OCEAN are getting good mileage out of their Taito tie up. So far the Japanese coin op manufacturer have provided the company with home version hits of *New Zealand Story*, *Operation Wolf*, *Chase HQ* and now the follow up to *Operation Wolf*, the best selling game of Christmas '88.

Thunderbolt's two Uzi sub machine guns mounted atop its massive cabinet have made it a favourite amongst younger gamers. But this is no toy for tiny tots – there is a tough game challenge in there that will appeal to players of all ages.

Your excuse for pulling the trigger is that aircraft hijackers are holding hostages deep in the African jungle. The government decides to get tough and sends in the commandos, which is where you come into it, clutching your joystick or light-gun.

The game improves on the original horizontally scrolling levels of *Op. Wolf* by featuring some 3D scenarios; the depressing truth, however, is that the real appeal still lies in simple gun lust. This is not a game for pacifists, or indeed for anyone with the slightest moral qualms about armed combat.

To succeed in rescuing the hostages you have to battle through eight tough levels without letting your life barometer tick down to zero. Your on-screen presence is no more than the gun sights of your machine gun, and during the fusillade, rocket launchers, additional ammunition, bullet proof vests, grenades, and medical packs can be picked up by shooting these items as they appear.

The first level challenges you to blast your way through various foot soldiers until you find the enemy spy. Pump him for information and then you are on to level Two – the Ammunition Dump. The simple aim here is to replenish your supplies.

Level Three places you at the wheels of a jeep and is one of the more impressive 3D levels. Your aim here is to reach the enemy hideout where some of the hostages have been taken.

Level Four gives you your chance to rescue the first of the hostages – but you will need to be an accurate shot to do so – you liberate the unfortunate fellows by shooting the locks off the doors. There is a heavily armed officer at the end of this level who is out to stop you.

You take to the water in a gun boat in Level Five in an attempt to reach the enemy HQ. You will need to save some rockets for this level to take out the heavily armed enemy craft that speed towards you. Level Six takes you inside the HQ where more hostages are to be held by heavily armed senior officers.

The last two levels take you to the airport where you battle your way to the remains of the hijacked DC 10 and free the remainder of the hostages. The climax calls for accurate shooting as you fight your way down the central aisle of the jetliner shooting the terrorists without hitting any of the hostages.

Apart from the attractive static screens between levels, there are plenty of surprises to be had by shooting incidental things that appear in your line of vision. All too often these turn out to be unfortunate animals who have strayed into the battle zone.

Operation Thunderbolt is at its best with a light gun – emulating the feel of the coin-op original far better than using the joystick to move your cross hair around the screen. The relatively simple screen presentation also lends itself very well to home conversion – even on 8-bit the game plays recognizably like the arcade machine. This is a fast and furious shoot 'em up with a good, planned, increase in difficulty and graphical rewards to sustain interest.

● Eugene Lacey

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AMSTRAD VERSION

All eight levels are included on a multiload system. Much better graphics and animation than in Op Wolf and featuring full colour in the battle sequences. A good variety of sound FX have been incorporated to synchronise with the variety of weapons at your disposal.

GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	4
AUDIO	7	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 815

AMIGA VERSION

A massive improvement on *Operation Wolf* and incredibly close to the coin-op. Absolutely everything has been included - right down to the commiseration screens when you fail the mission. Sounds identical to the coin-op when you turn it up loud and plays superbly with the mouse. Arguably Ocean's best coin-op conversion yet.

GRAPHICS	9	**IQ FACTOR**	4
AUDIO	8	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 927

> OCEAN prove that two guns are better than one in this Op Wolf sequel

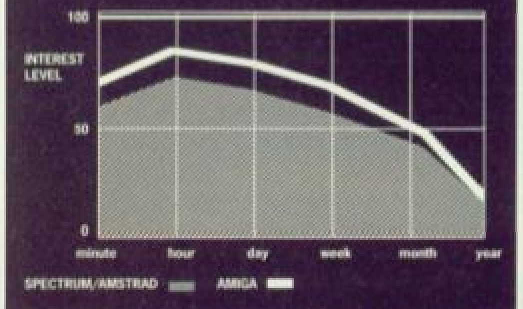
SPECTRUM VERSION

Very impressive graphically - despite being in black and white in the main action window. Loses the feel of the coin-op slightly in the sound FX department. Op Thunderbolt is heavily dependent on sound to create the impression of battlefield mayhem and the Speccy struggles a bit with this. All of the levels are here though – and the game is every bit a playable as some of the bigger machine versions.

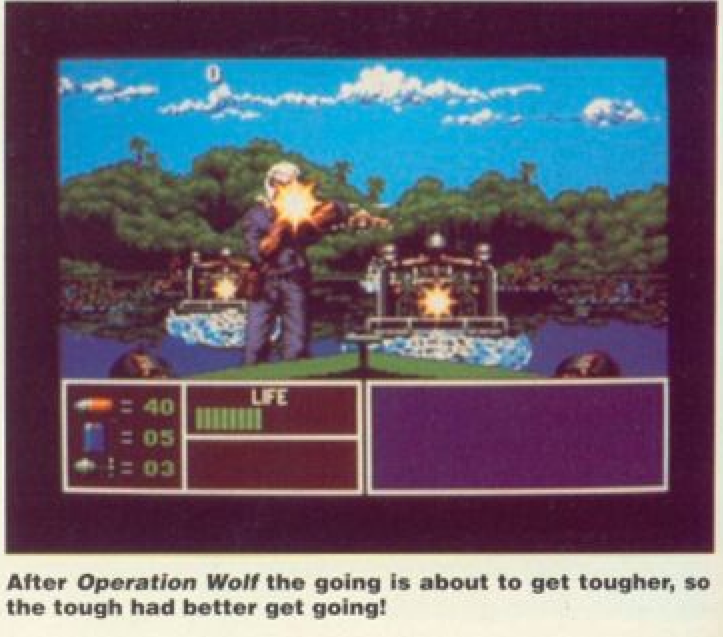
GRAPHICS	8	**IQ FACTOR**	4
AUDIO	5	**FUN FACTOR**	8

ACE RATING 805

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



This will keep you amused for a while but doesn't really have long term staying power.



After *Operation Wolf* the going is about to get tougher, so the tough had better get going!

BEVERLY HILLS Cop

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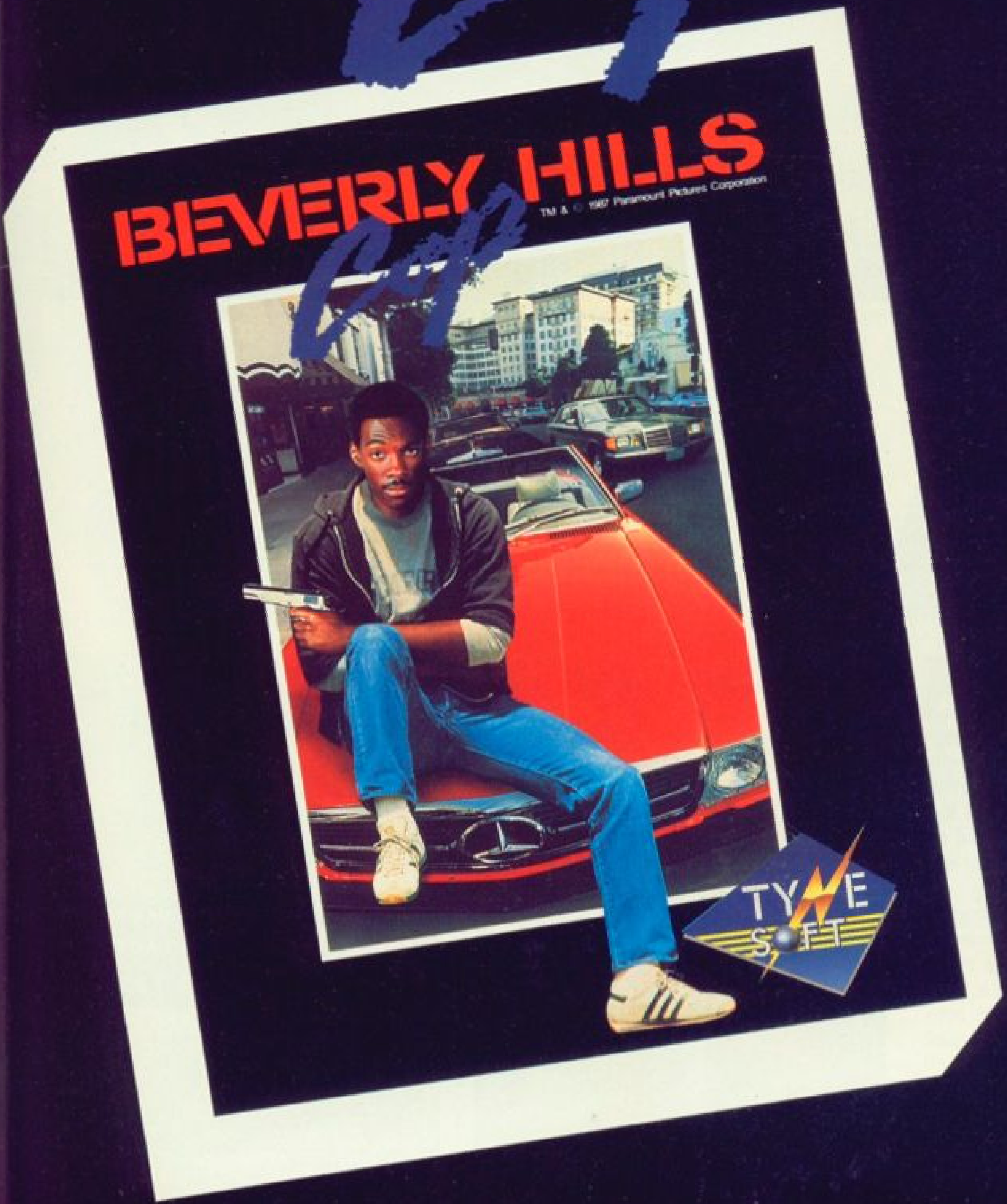

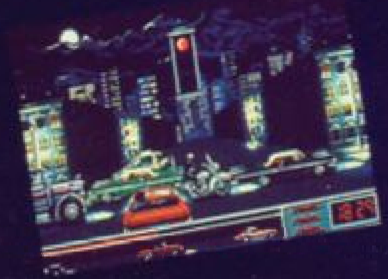

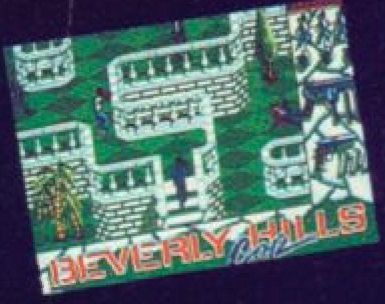

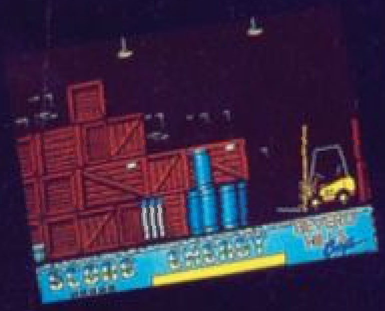

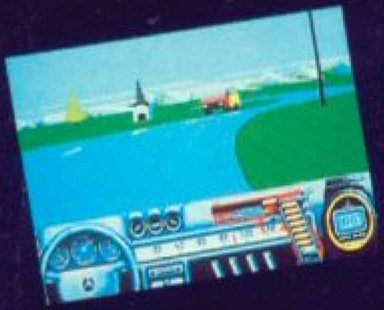

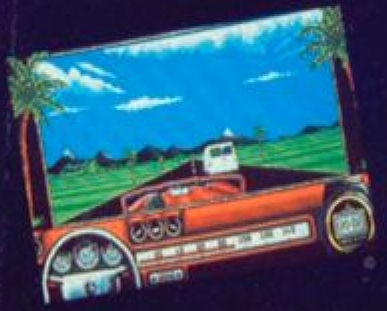

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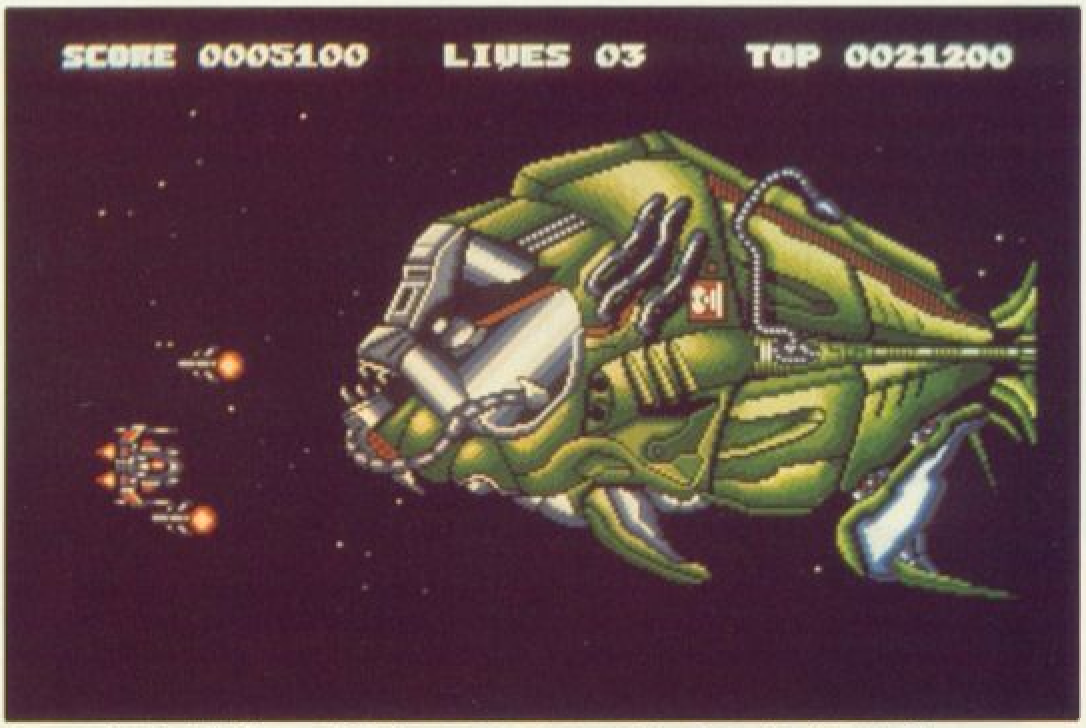
DARIUS

THE EDGE prove that three screens can go into one

HORDES of keen gamers were attracted to The Edge's stand at the PC Show by a monster, three screened *Darius* machine switched to free play – but that was two years ago and we've been a long time waiting for the home brew. Was it worth it?

Darius was one of the first machines to use three screens welded together to give a very wide field of view. The technique was used again in the excellent beat 'em up *Ninja Warriors* and, more recently, in the sequel to Darius – *Sagail*.

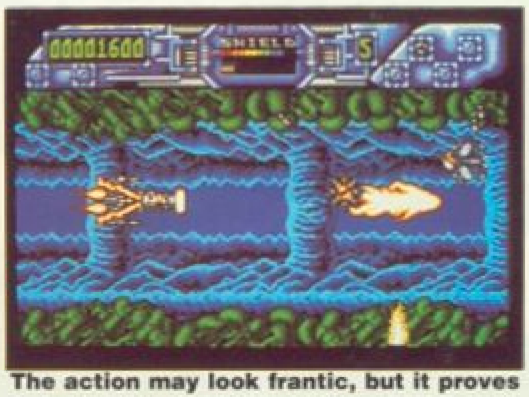
The screens were set deep inside the cabinet giving the graphics a very sharp, glowing, almost holographic feel. At the start of the game you are shown a galactic map which enables you to pick your route. After a few goes you soon learn which routes to avoid. The scenario is typical shoot-em-up fare with a two player option, power-ups, and underwater locations.



Impressive isn't it. Shame that the screen compression doesn't quite work!

Unfortunately the Edge have not been able to emulate the wide three screen feel of *Darius* – presenting what looks like just another horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up. Luckily, *Darius* was not entirely dependent on the triple screen effect for its playability – it's a good shoot 'em up in its own right and its essential addictive qualities shine through in this conversion. The main thing about *Darius* is that it is VERY tough – be prepared to die, die, and die again before you get anywhere against the ugly underwater monsters it sends at you.

The first really nasty opponent comes at the end of the first level. A message comes up on screen informing you that a 'Huge space ship – Fatty Glutton is approaching'. A great tension builder this, as you wait for the monster to materialise. It turns out to be a giant green fish whose fins have to be blasted off one by one before it blows and allows you to proceed to the next level.



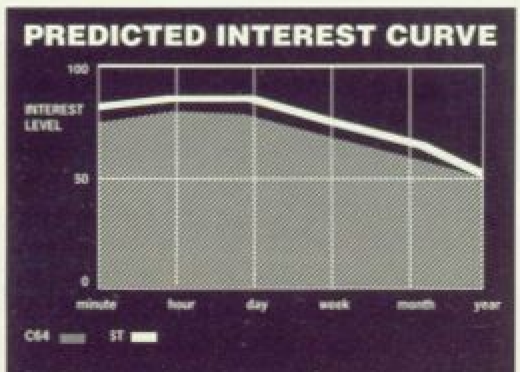
The action may look frantic, but it proves to be a little slow

There are twenty eight different levels to battle through in order to clock *Darius*. It is more or less pointless tackling the end of level nasties unless you are well tooled with power ups. They move around so much and take a life every they touch you, so unless you can do sufficient damage with your first few blasts of flak there is little point in tackling them at all.

Darius offers sophisticated control over the power ups with a token-collect system for building them up and the ability to vary the position of some of the cannons.

Fans of the original will not be disappointed by this conversion. It doesn't quite stand up by comparison with some of the very best horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups currently available – *Katakis, Armalyte*, and the splendid new *X-Out* for example – but it does manage to recreate the feel of *Darius* on a home machine and this in itself is a considerable achievement.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Darius appeals as long as there is an end of level nasty you haven't beaten yet - and that is likely to be a very long time indeed.

ST VERSION

Some really irritating disk swaps slightly mar ST *Darius*. You have to swap disks to bring up the end of level nasties – and then swap back again after they've killed you, or you them. Apart from that the game reaches a high standard in sound and graphics. Sparse use of colours but it does manage to scroll nice and smoothly. Would have been improved by a touch more speed.

GRAPHICS	**7**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 725

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
SPEC	£8.99cs	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs £14.99dk	OUT NOW

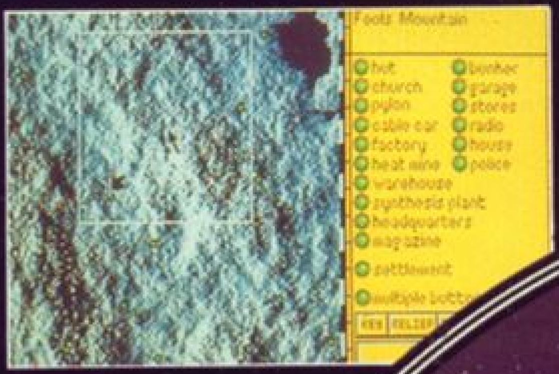
C64/128 VERSION

This was always going to be the toughest format for *Darius* to earn its keep on as the C64 already has arguably the best range of horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups of any machine (*Armalyte, Uridium, Zynapse*, and many more). Despite this it holds up pretty well. It is still recognizably and playably *Darius*. Fast, colourful, and nicely animat-

GRAPHICS	**7**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 705

THE NEW ICE AGE DAWNS


Fools Mountain
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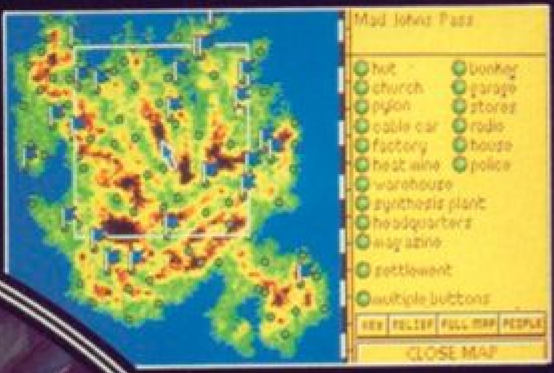
RELIEF


Mad Johns Pass
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heat mine
warehouse
synthesis plant
headquarters
magazine
bunker
garage
stores
radio
house
police
settlement
multiple buttons
KEY
RELIEF
FULL MAP
PEOPLE
CLOSE MAP

RAINBIRD

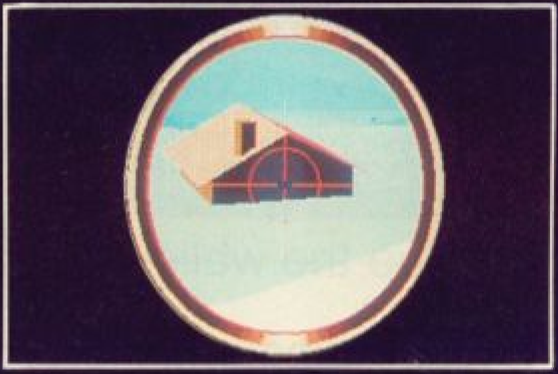
MASTER OF STRATEGY

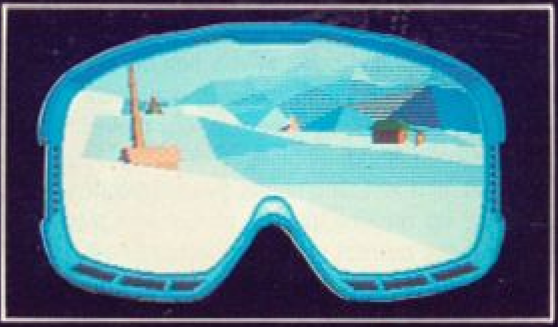
XII
XII
XII
XII

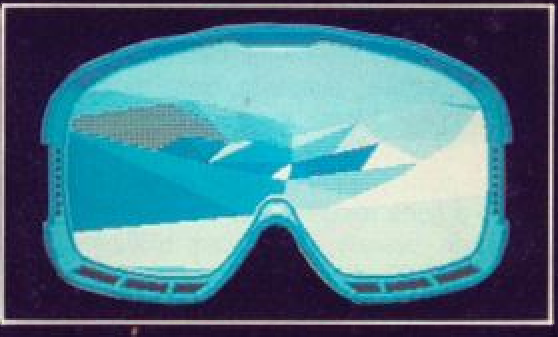
THE STRATEGY GAME

MIDWINTER

OF THE DECADE ARRIVES







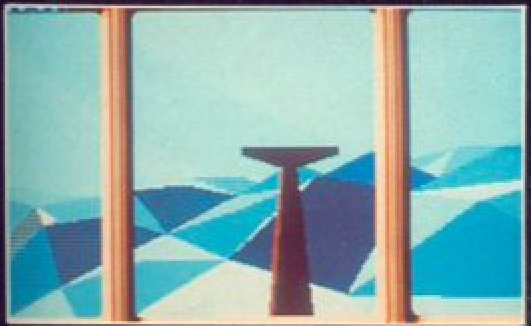
As a new Ice Age dawns in Rainbird's gigantic new classic, strategy gaming also enters a new era. For Midwinter is a genuinely original concept that launches revolutionary techniques onto the home computer screen.

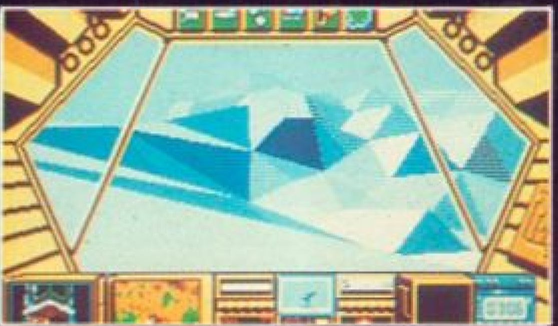
The scenario is convincingly realistic as a new Ice Age grips the world. Together with a small group of pioneers you have colonized the Midwinter Isle, a 160,000 square mile land mass now under threat from invaders intent on seizing your sanctuary.

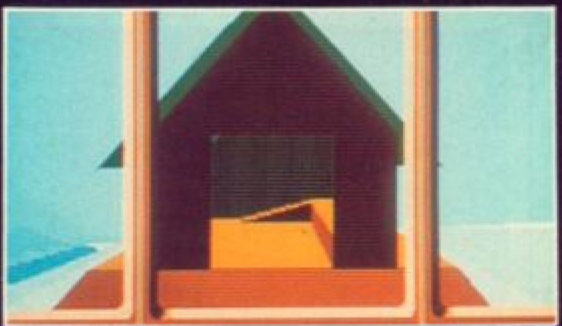
Compelling action and strategy take place across a spectacular 3D fractal generated landscape with its stunning geographical accuracy. You control 32 personalities, each with different qualities, skills and complex personal relationships. Enemy movements can be tracked, and battle plans made, using the incredibly detailed on-screen map.

In your bid to defend the life-supporting heat mines, you can ski, hang-glide, travel by snow buggy or cable car, snipe and sabotage the enemy. There is no easy way to win, but the game's unique depth and absorbing complexity will keep you trying until you do.

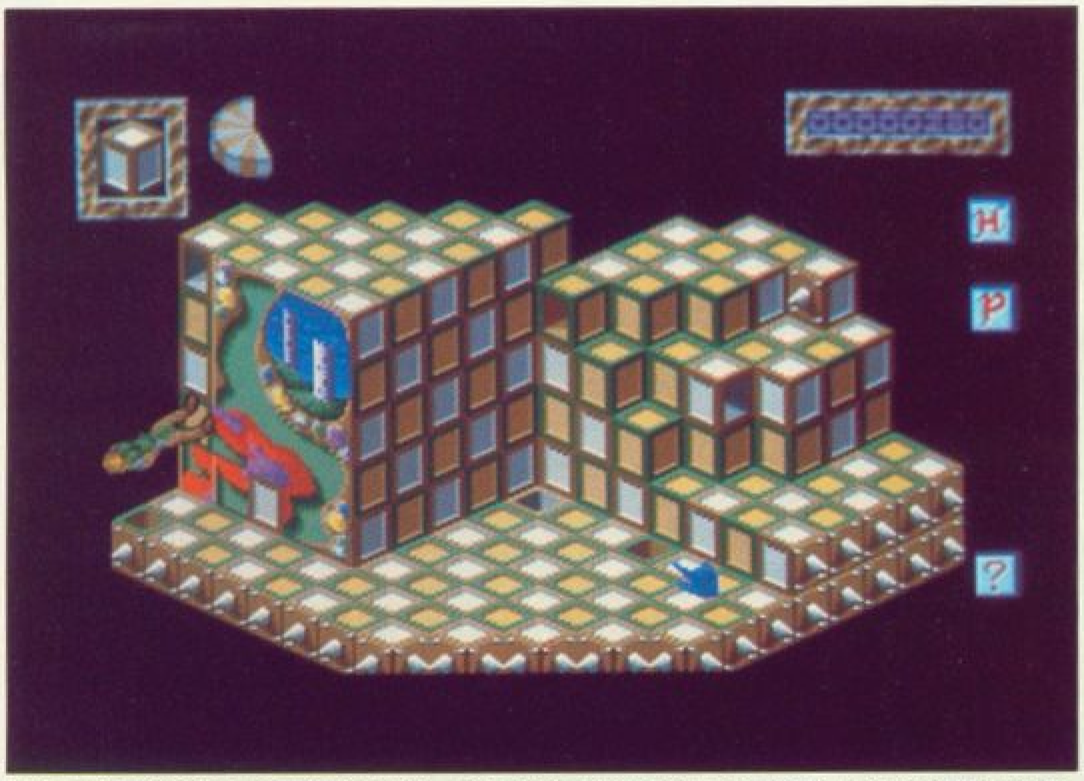
The deep Midwinter is upon us. Be prepared for a long and exciting battle against its elements.







NEVERMIND



The Amiga screens, as you can see, look very pretty, and also provides food for thought.

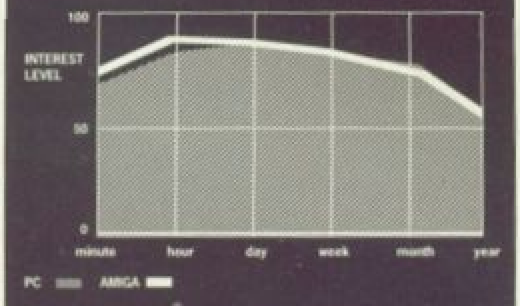
PERHAPS it's the *Tetris* boom, or maybe it's just that people are tiring of shooting things and driving computerised super cars. Whatever the cause, puzzle games are back with a vengeance and few of them come more puzzling than this topsy-turvy offering from Psyclapse.

Never Mind is a sort of 3D animated jigsaw puzzle race against the clock with whiz bang graphics and sound effects. If that description sounds a little hazy then brace your self as it gets worse.

You control a cave man in a loin cloth who can walk up walls and through 'warps' to position himself in the correct plane. Getting this Neanderthal walking correctly takes a bit of practice. Left and right swivels him on the spot – pointing in whatever direction you want him to walk, and then pushing forward makes him do it. Got it? Good.

PSYCLAPSE send you up the walls with this original puzzler

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



This is not the sort of game you are likely to play through in five minutes – a good stayer!

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£19.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£24.99dk	OUT NOW

No other versions planned.

His aim is to complete jigsaw puzzles by picking up missing pieces of tile and placing them in the correct order. Sometimes he has to warp through the walls to get in to the right position and all the while time is running out.

Psyclapse have embellished this basic idea by adding animated pictures, chess pieces that move Dalek-like around the tiles to bump you out of position, dissolving tiles, transporter tiles, and even islands and causeways.

All of this is hellishly addictive. It's the sort of game you idly drop into conversation – a quick remark about the weather and then, casually, your recent triumph over level 97. Games that inspire this sort of one-upmanship between players are almost always good games and this is certainly the case with *Never Mind.*

Actually reaching level 300 (yes, thee are 300 levels) would probably require the combined brain power of the entire Mensa membership of the world if the progression in difficulty from levels one to five is anything to go by. Fortunately there is a help key to assist you as well as a password system that enables you to begin on the level where you left off.

AMIGA VERSION

Peppered with the kind of graphical delights that seem to have become the Psygnosis trade mark. Particularly impressive are the animated 3D jig saw puzzles – with segments that can be removed and moved around whilst retaining the overall logic of the puzzle. Adequate musical accompaniment and sound FX enhance the main business of solving the puzzles.

GRAPHICS	**7**	**IQ FACTOR**	**8**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 870

PC VERSION

Requires EGA and 512K Ram – supporting Amstrad 1640 and above, Tandy 1000, 3000, 4000, and 5000. Very nimble fingers are required on the PC to move the cave man around and complete the puzzles before the time runs out. The animation is competent and the graphics are sound – even if the colours are a little garish against the black background. Good selection of game play options. Available on three and a half inch disks as well as five and a quarter.

GRAPHICS	**6**	**IQ FACTOR**	**8**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

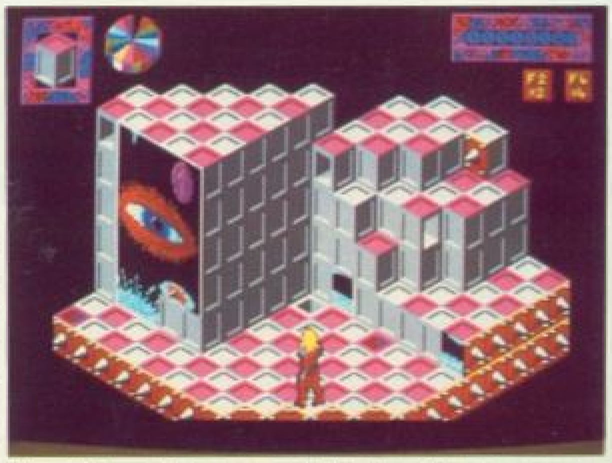
ACE RATING 860

The help key shows you the completed picture for a few brief seconds – so at least you know what you have to achieve.

Psyclapse are obviously aware that *Never Mind* is going to appeal to older games players as it features a 'Boss' key which you can press to bring up tables of charts and figures on screen to give the impression you're actually doing something productive (you are – solving level six).

Never Mind is an absorbing and addictive puzzle game that, along with games like Superior's Bonecruncher, or even the legendary Boulderdash, reminds you how nice it is to get the opportunity to use your brain as well as your reflexes. Refreshingly different.

● Eugene Lacey



The PC version may not look quite as sexy as the game on the Amiga, but plays just as well.

BEVERLY HILLS COP

TYNESOFT go villain-nabbing with Eddie Murphy

AXEL Foley is onto a group of arms smugglers headed by the sinister Mr. Big. There are four sections to the game each in a different style.

First you confront the gang in the arms depot. This is a left to right scrolling affair with some nicely executed parallax scrolling giving an illusion of depth. To kill the villains you must press the fire button twice: first to get into gun mode and aim, and secondly to fire. This takes a little getting used to, but you will soon be popping off baddies quite successfully. As well as the bad guys shooting back at you, they also throw sticks of dynamite and bombs.

The second, most impressive, section of the game has you chasing three vans loaded with crates of arms. You must weave in and out of the other traffic while firing – hit them enough times and they will explode. If you manage to overcome the tricky handling of the vehicle in this section you go on to tackle the villains in Mr.Big's mansion in the final two parts of the game.

Beverly Hills Cop is saved by the variety of the gameplay. There's nothing spectacular here, but the product as a whole is quite entertaining and should stand up to quite a few hours of play.

● Laurence Scotford

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.99	IMMINENT
AMS	£9.99 cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
SPEC	£9.99 cs • £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99 cs • £14.99dk	OUT NOW

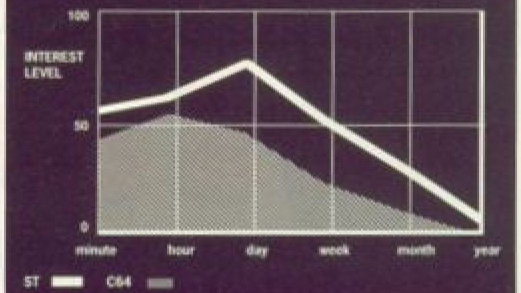
ST VERSION

Nothing special, with the exception of the driving section which boasts graphics to rival *Hard Drivin'*. Entertaining, with good presentation, but no adrenalin rush here...

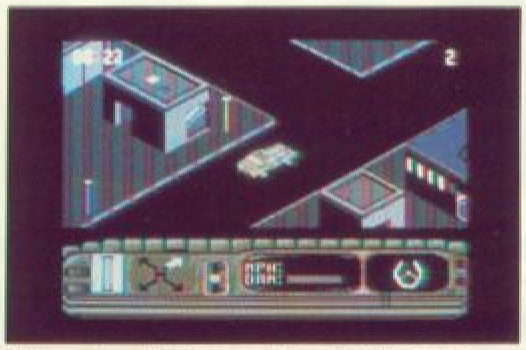
GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 740

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Takes quite a while to get accustomed to the controls, but should provide solid short term entertainment once you have done so.



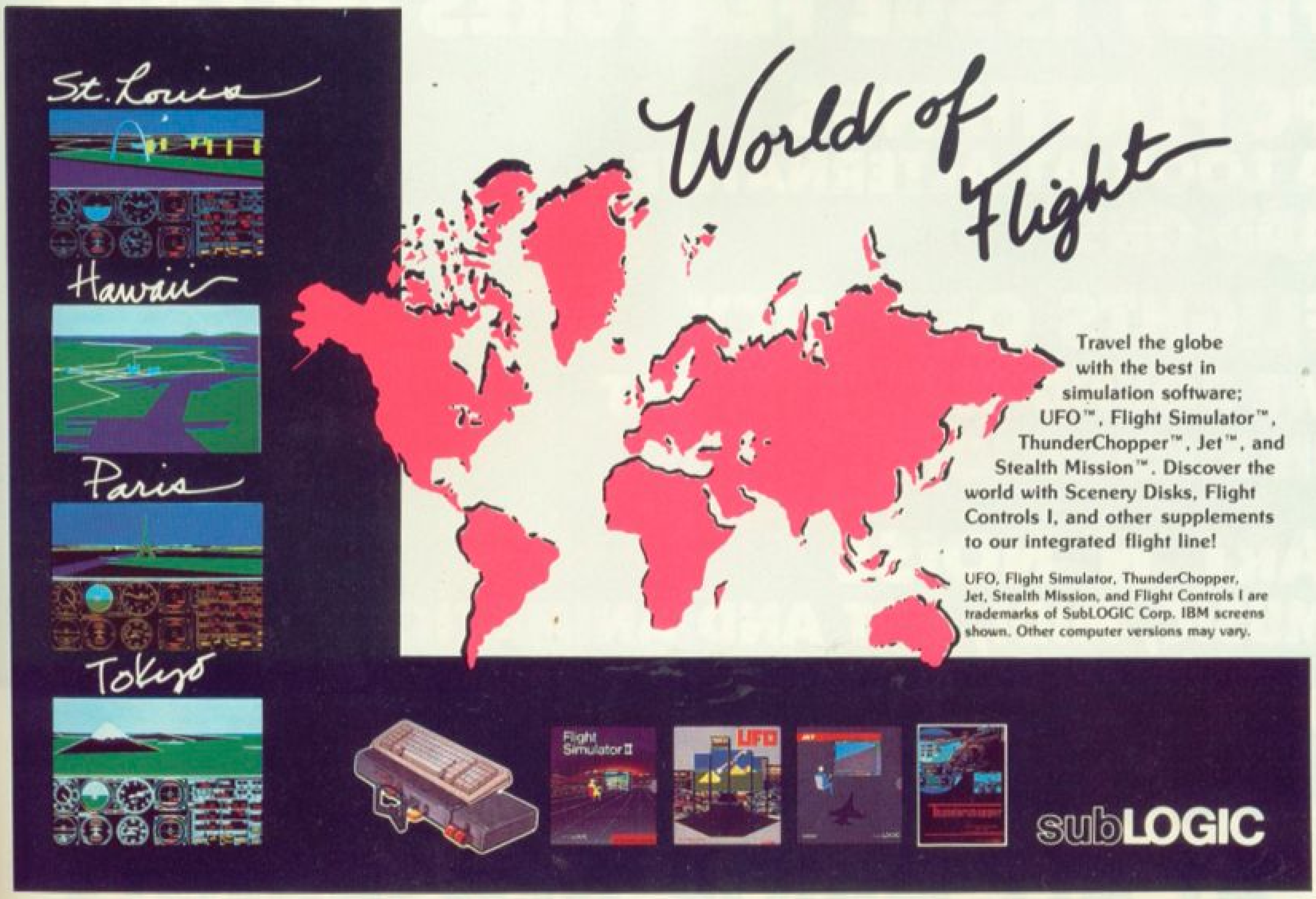
The extra driving section in the C64 version looks mediocre, but plays much the same.

C64 VERSION

A completely different game to that on the ST. There is an extra driving section to begin with, but this doesn't make up for the poor playability of the game as a whole. Certainly nothing to write home about.

GRAPHICS	**6**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**5**

ACE RATING 550



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THE UNTOUCHABLES

OCEAN demonstrate that no one messes with Elliot Ness and gets away with it

THE legendary Elliot Ness, incorruptable opponent of the infamous Al Capone, was the subject of a classic television serial of the fifties starring Robert Stack as the great man himself. At that time there was a great deal of interest in twenties Chicago. There were interminable film and television treatments of gangster antics, and, of course, great names like Cagney, Lorre, Bogart, and good old Edward G. made themselves famous for playing mobsters.

Recently there has been something of a revival in this period of Chicago's history, with several new treatments of old gangland themes. As well as a re-run of the Robert Stack episodes there has also been a long overdue and very successful film of *The Untouchables* starring Sean Connery and Kevin Costner. Ocean's game is based quite closely on the plot of the film.

You begin as Elliot Ness in a warehouse full of crates of liquer due for bootlegging. Your task is to collect ten pieces of evidence that prove the bootlegging is taking place. This involves shooting Capone's bookeepers (distinguishable by their brown overcoats) and collecting the documents they drop. At the same time you also have to contend with the other members of the gang who are all intent on sending you to an early grave.

When gang members are shot they occasionally leave bonuses behind them. Collecting these does useful things like topping up your energy and ammo, and giving you limited continuous fire. As if you didn't already have quite enough to cope with, you also have a limited amount of time to collect all ten pieces of evidence. The trick is to split your time between collecting the necessary bonuses and chasing the bookeepers.

⁄ST VERSION

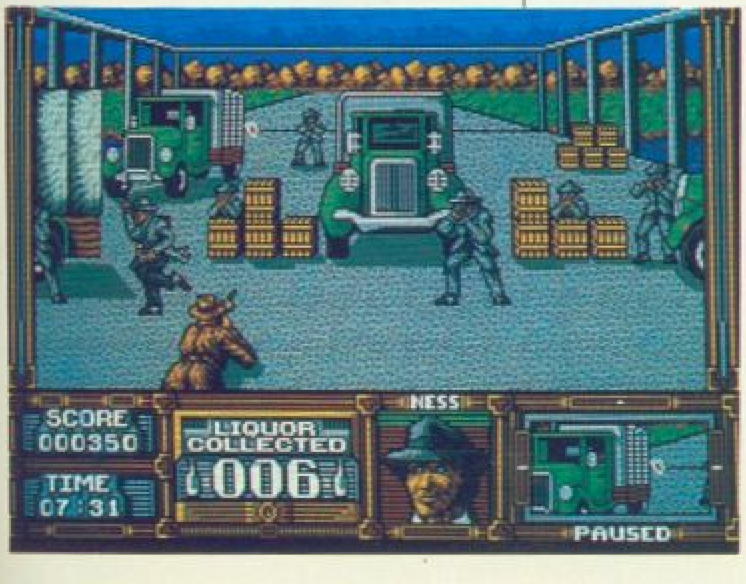
The audio-visual element in *The Untouchables* is extremely polished: as we have come to expect from Ocean. It is a shame that the gameplay is a little difficult, especially in the earlier sections, as this prevents the game from being quite as accessible as it might have been to the average games player. Nevertheless that is a minor quibble against what is otherwise a superior game.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**5**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

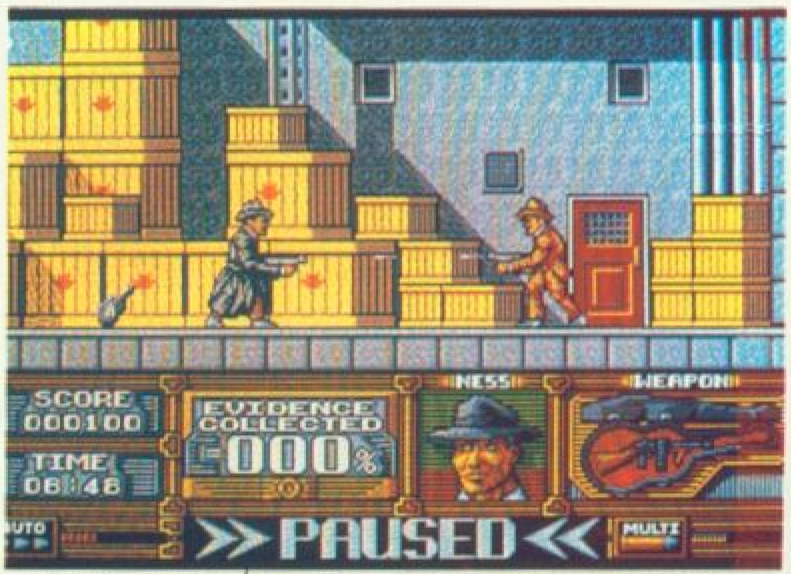
ACE RATING 860

Next it is onto a border bridge in an attempt to stop an illegal liquor run, and here some very sharp shooting is required. The same is also true of the Alleys game. Here you are treated to a very slick, and very difficult shootout. The character you select to play is backed against a wall at the end of an alleyway. Click the firebutton and he swings round the corner to face a volley of gunfire from gansters shooting out of windows. He has only a moment to aim and fire before ducking back to the safety of the wall again. There next follows more shoot-outs in a railway station and finally on a rooftop, only you now have hostages to avoid which makes sharpshooting not only a useful attribute, but absolutely essential.

The one thing which soon becomes clear about *The Untouchables* is the similarity in concept and execution between this product and *Batman*. The graphics and gameplay in the first section especially are reminiscent of the first and last sections of *Batman*. Unfortunately, while *The Untouchables* is a very competant game, it doesn't quite have playability of the other license. While *Batman* was superbly playable and had plenty of variety, *The Untouchables* is a little too difficult, and there is not really that much difference between the sections.



Yet more difficult shoot-em-up action.



The scene in the warehouse – there's a nice bonus already...

RELEASE BOX

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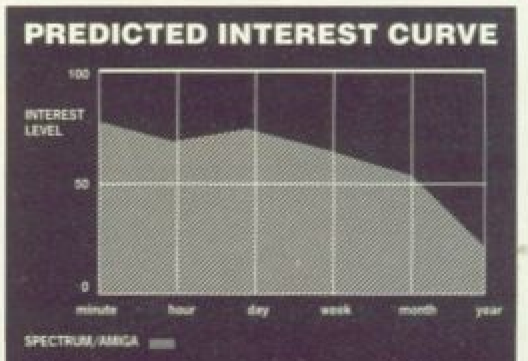
AMIGA	£24.99dk	IMMINENT
SPECTRUM	£8.99cs• £14.99dk	IMMINENT
AMSTRAD	£9.99cs• £14.99dk	IMMINENT
C64/128	£9.99cs• £14.99dk	IMMINENT
IBM PC	NOT AVAILABLE	

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Difficult to get into, but this should keep you occupied for some time before your interest wanes

Despite all that, it is parhaps a little unfair to draw too many parallels between the two licenses. *The Untouchables* is a good game compared with some other recent licenses I could mention. While it may not have a lot of immediate impact, this is a game that is likely to grow on you provided you take the time and trouble to overcome its level of difficulty.

● Laurence Scotford

AQUANAUT

ADDICTIVE'S underwater world

ROLL UP, roll up. Travel to exotic underwater worlds. Meet strangely beautiful creatures – and kill them.

Actually it's not all pointless killing in this three disk epic from the same team who designed *The Kristal.* It has a point to it. A highly developed plot no less – in the style of a 1930's 'B' Movie.

In a last ditch attempt to rally their forces following a failed attempt to colonise Earth, the Raminishi aliens have ditched in the Atlantic Ocean where they are holding up awaiting further instructions. You are the super hero Ric Flair – the only man deemed tough enough to enable him to take on this challenge.

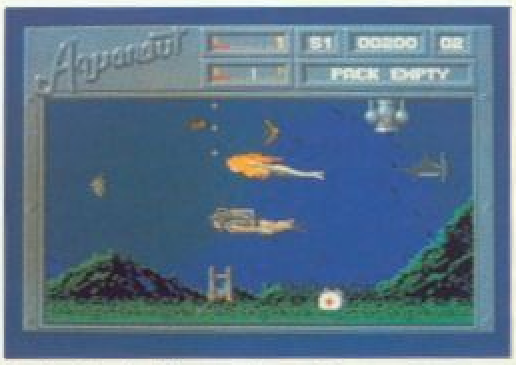
You are dropped in the area by a high speed launch. Your mission: to locate Commander Zeekee's ship and destroy it. But just as with all good 'B' movies there is a bit more to it than this. Y'see, Zeekee and his cohorts have been transmitting messages to some other thing or things on Earth. But to what?

That may sound like a pushover of a mission for a man with such a prodigious appetite for Weetabix as Ric Flair – but things have been made rather difficult for him.

For a start there are the swordfish. These have a tendency to swim towards you at great speed – impaling you on their proboscis and turning you into a 'seafood kebab', as the commiseration screen so gently puts it .

The sharks are pretty peckish as well – having undergone a mutation caused by radioactive pollution. Jelly fish, alien mines, and radioactive waste are also hazards that have to be overcome. Each Ric feast is followed by a screen explaining what grizzly fate befell our hero.

But it is not all hazards and problems for Ric. The Aquanaut Division have deposited several canisters in the ocean packed with equipment to help you complete your mission. By shooting open these canisters you can then swim into them to pick up extra ammunition, a booster to propel you through the water at great speed, Transmitter, First Aid kit, Crow Bar, Wire Cutters, and Super Aspirin Pills. All of these items need to be used at the right time to complete the mission. Only a limited supply of oxygen can be taken with you on your mission so you will have to avail your self of the deep sea diving bells to replenish your supply from time to time.



Hello, looks like you've got company...

Level two is a good deal tougher than the first one. There is much more to worry about than simply swimming along horizontally – blasting everything that comes your way with your harpoon gun. You have to work your way through a cavernous system of flooded caves beneath the Ocean floor. Some very strange creatures live down here. There is the rock monster that pops up crocodile-like from underneath a rock and swallows you whole. To make matters worse, some of the caves are blocked by boulders so you have to pick up and use the sticks of dynamite to blast a passage.

If you survive this far, it's time for another disk swap and level three provides you with the final showdown against the Raminishi aliens as you seek to destroy their flag ship.

Programmers Fissionchip have put a lot of love and care into *Aquanaut.* The close attention paid to graphics and animation pays real dividends – lending the whole package the feel of a Cinemaware game. Unlike many some graphics-heavy games, however, *Aquanaut* is not at all lacking in playability. The animation of Ric himself is a case in point; he moves through the water with the real look and feel of an underwater commando. Another nice touch is the ability to be able to choose which level you wish to start on right at the beginning of the game.

Only two criticisms have to be made. The first is the lack of creatures in level two. The ones that are there are fantastic, but they are a bit too few and far between – making the cave sequence of *Aquanaut* very bare by comparison with the rest of the game. The second criticism is that *Aquanaut* is very much a 'do it, and leave it' type of game, and for a shoot 'em up at this price a bit more longevity would have improved it even further.

Despite these niggles, *Aquanaut* is an entertaining, pretty, and absorbing game, certainly better than *The Kristal* – and strong evidence that Fissionchip are indeed a development house of much promise and more than capable of living up to all the hype that surrounded their previous release.

Eugene Lacey

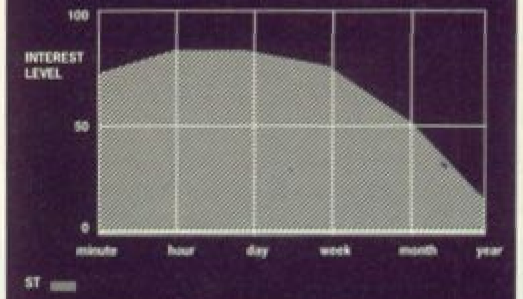
ST VERSION

Three disks packed with lavish graphics. Full marks for cutting down on unnecessary and annoying disk swaps. The sound FX are adequate, if a little unimaginative. Animation is very smooth, even in the horizontally scrolling parts of the game – something that is not too easy to achieve on the ST.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**5**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FACTOR**	**7**

ACE RATING 746

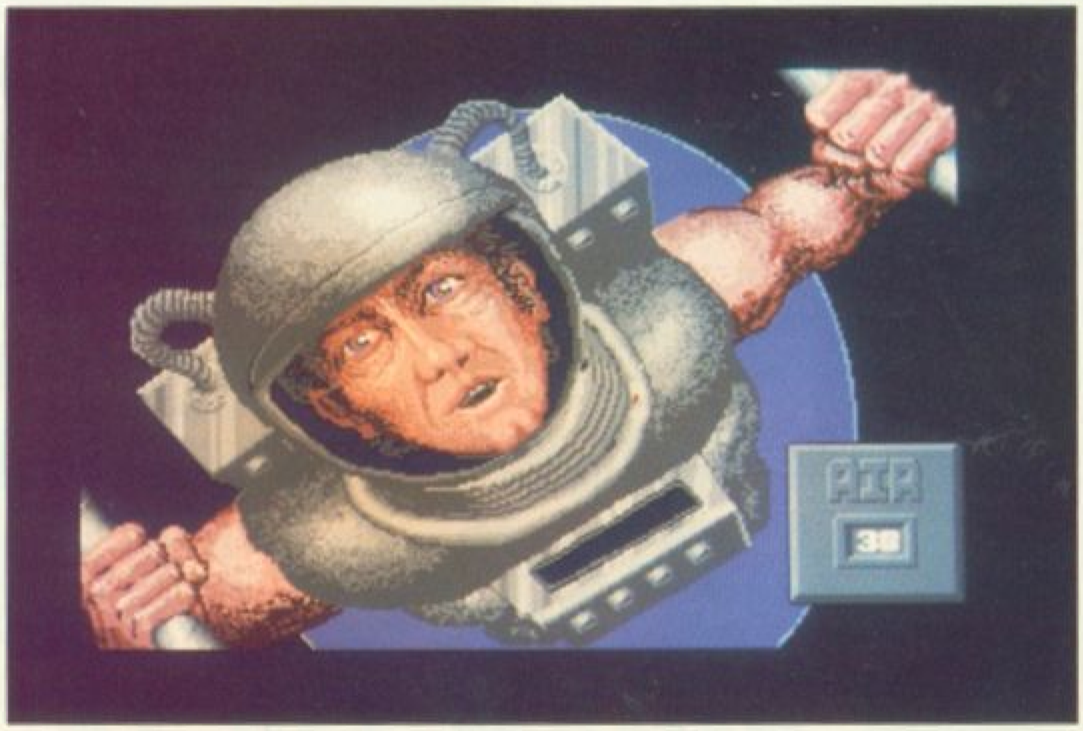
PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



The prettiness of Aquanaut will ensure that you will want to explore all of it. Once you have been everywhere, seen everything, and done everything though – that may well be the end of it for most gamers.

RELEASE BOX

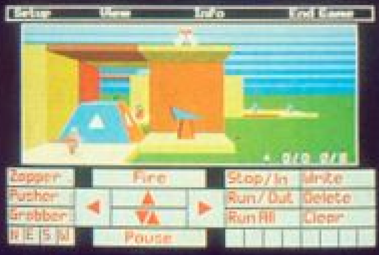
ATARI ST	£24.95dk	OUT NOW
AMIGA	£24.95dk	IMMINENT
No other versions planned.		

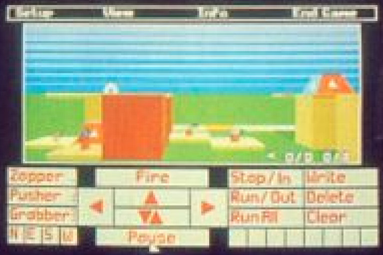


OUT OF THIS WORLD

TOWER OF BABEL

An intricate 3D strategy game involving an interconnecting network of towers, platforms and lifts all rendered in solid 3D with innovative light and shading techniques. Take control of robot spiders and program them to solve problems and puzzles and interact with other creatures, such as Pushers, Zappers and Grabbers. Alternatively, real time control is available to you at any time for instantaneous reaction to the game's developments. For the more adventurous among you, there is a complete game designer, allowing the construction of your own series of towers, platforms and lifts. Attempt to fox your friends with your own fiendishly difficult creations. More than just a game, more than just a puzzle – Tower of Babel is a whole new concept in strategy gaming.


Setup
View
Info
End Game
Zopper
Pusher
Grabber
Fire
Pause
Stop/In
Run/Out
Run All
Write
Delete
Clear
N E S W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Pusher
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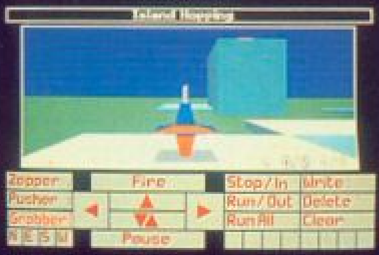
N E S W


Island Hopping
Zopper
Pusher
Grabber
Fire
Pause
Stop/In
Run/Out
Run All
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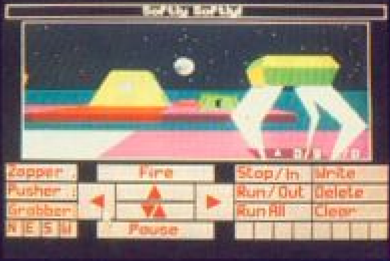
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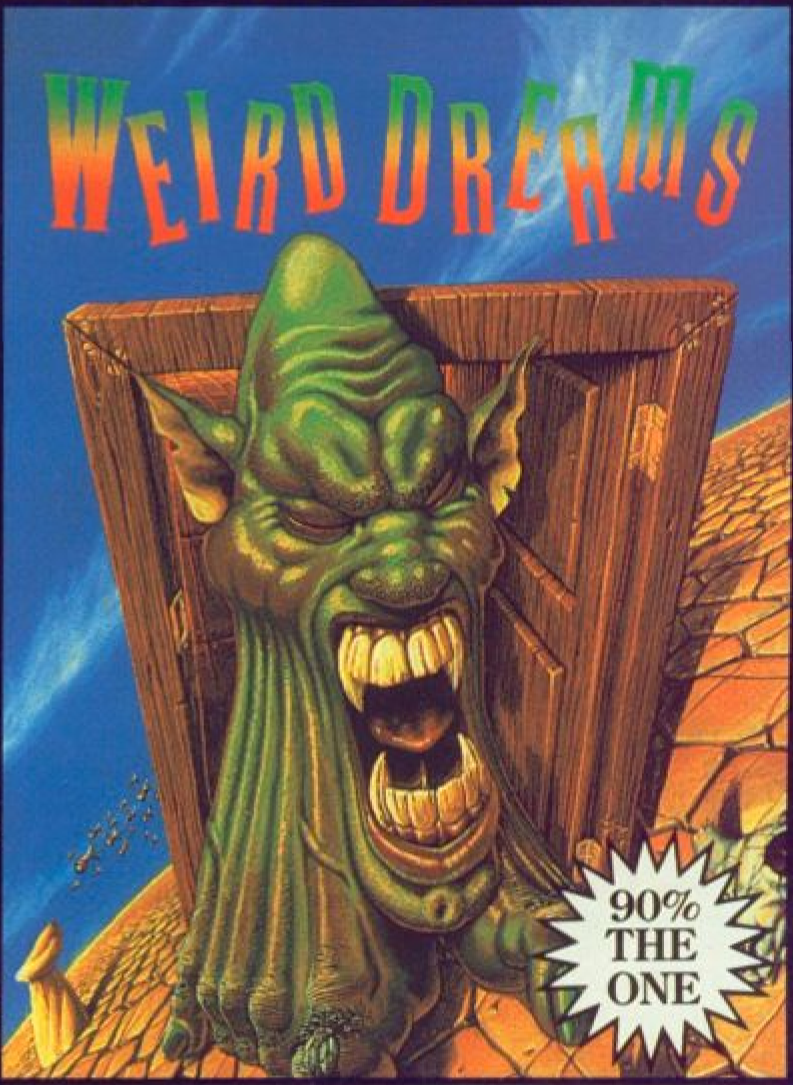
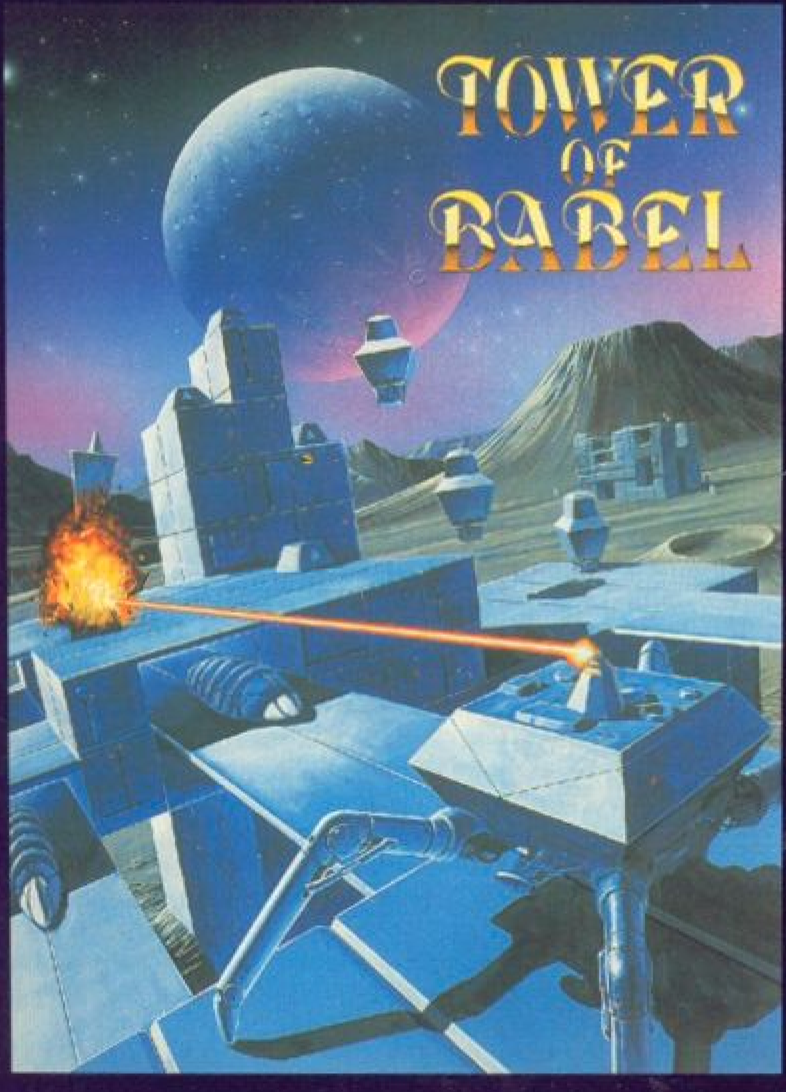
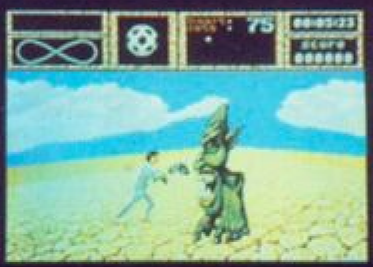
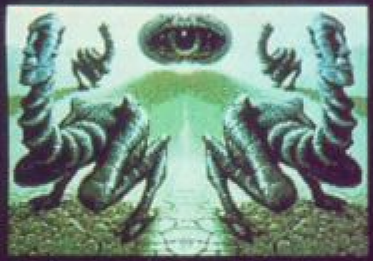
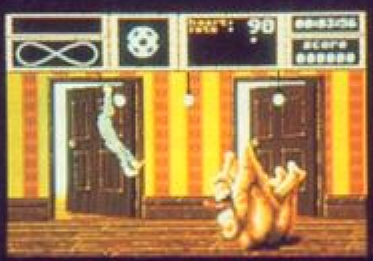
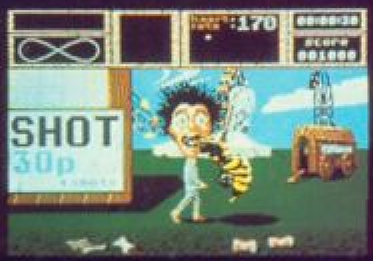

WEIRD DREAMS
90% THE ONE


TOWER OF BABEL









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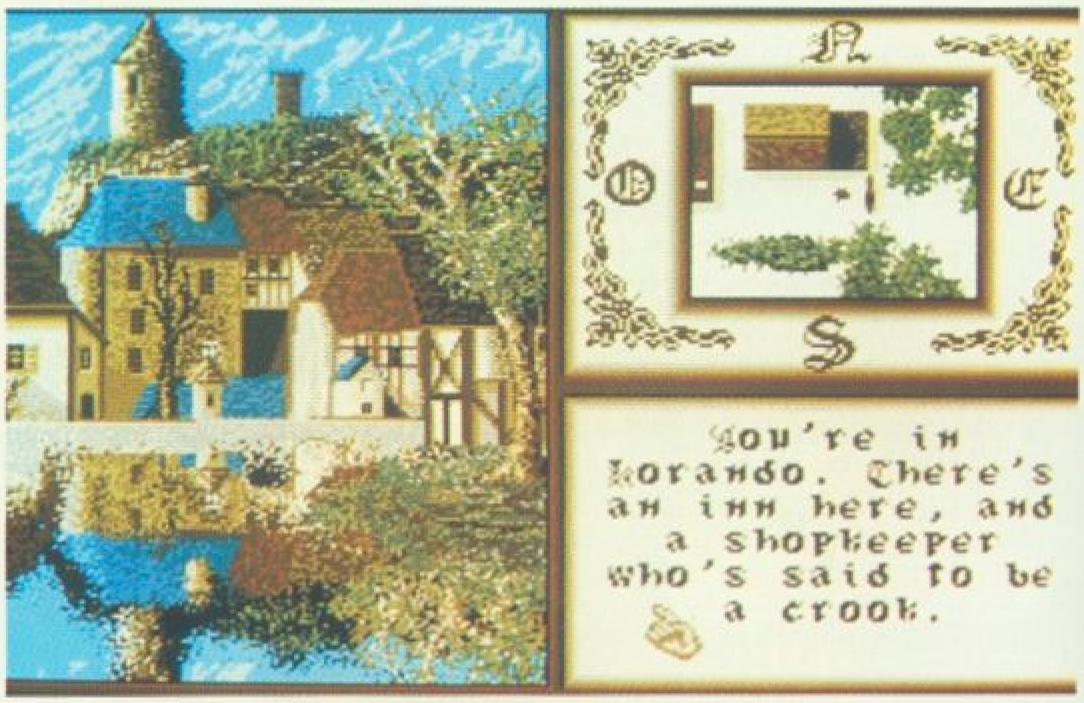
IRONLORD

UBI SOFT joust with *Defender of the Crown*... and lose!

AFTER a gestation of more than a year, *Iron Lord* has finally emerged from Ubi Soft's chateau to challenge British and American contenders for the software crown. If you haven't already heard about *Iron Lord* (who hasn't been reading the preview pages huh?) then let me enlighten you.

You play the part of a downtrodden prince, once heir to a great kingdom – but your family have been killed and your chateau destroyed by your villainous uncle. Now he is gathering a corrupt army from the forces of darkness, and is about to descend on the land and put it under a perpetual shadow of evil. Only one man is capable of gathering an army to defeat the enemy – that man is (of course) you! But first you must convince the kingdom's citizens of your worthiness.

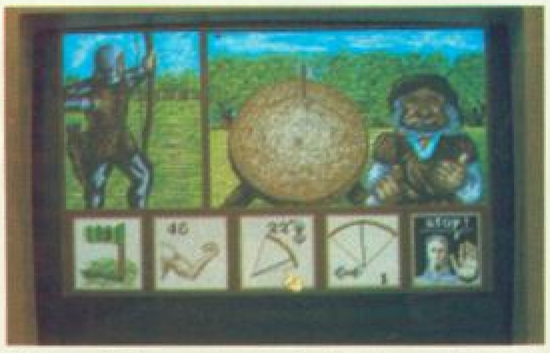
If you are a Cinemaware fan then you will recognise in this game many elements of *Defender of the Crown*. In fact the product does have a very similar feel to the Cinemaware titles. A great deal of time has obviously been spent on the presentation of this game, and the result is a very slick looking piece of software. Unfortunately I have the same criticism of *Iron Lord* as I do of some of the Cinemaware range: nice graphics and sound... shame about the game!



You're in Lorando. There's an inn here, and a shopkeeper who's said to be a crook.

A typical village – pretty isn't it? Shame there's not really that much to do here.

Accompanied by suitable mediaeval sounding ditties you must ride from your ruined Chateau into the surrounding countryside where there are a number of locations for you to visit. When you arrive at a new location you are presented with a miniature overhead view of the village, abbey, or whatever area you are exploring. You must then guide your little man (with rapidly moving legs) around in an attempt to find something remotely interesting to do.



Got one! The ugly guy indicates you're one step nearer the finals.

Whenever you come across somebody else in the game a standard menu is called up giving you various options such as talking, buying, giving, and so forth, along with amusing animated pictures of the person you are talking to. These sequences can be a bit repetitive (you always seem to have the same repertoire of questions and naff chat), but there are some delicious moments – try chatting up the serving wench for an extremely ego-crushing response.

Occasionally you will have an opportunity to play one of the sub-games: archery, dice-throwing, arm-wrestling, and fencing, which all come as a welcome relief from aimless wandering. The archery and fencing both require a reasonable amount of skill, and these are the two you will have to practice fairly intensively if you are to make any progress. The dice throwing is a game of luck, and the only element you have any real control over is the amount you stake. Finally arm wrestling involves a bit of good old fashioned joystick-waggling – so have your knackered joystick plugged in rather than your brand spanking new model.

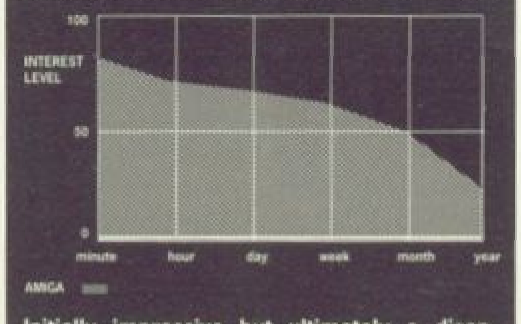
There are to ways to muster an army, and ideally you need to make use of both approaches. The first, and easiest, is to gain prestige by doing well in the sub-games. The second, and ultimately more effective, is to win the sympathy and cooperation of the other characters in the game by undertaking quests for them.

Once you have built up an army of a suitable size you can return to your ruined Chateau and declare war. You now enter the final phase of *Iron Lord* which takes the form of a miniature war-game with a graphical command system.

At first sight *Iron Lord* looks like an extremely exciting product. The presentation can't be faulted, but unfortunately it is sadly lacking in real substance. A brave, but failed, attempt to play Cinemaware at their own game.

● Laurence Scotford

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Initially impressive but ultimately a disappointment.

AMIGA VERSION

This program makes obvious use of the Amiga's graphic and sound abilities, but in all other respects the machine is grossly underused. I can see that a lot of work has gone into Iron Lord, but there really isn't enough of a game here to justify the pretty presentation. Having said that, if you enjoy Cinemaware's stuff then it might be worth persevering with this.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**5**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**6**

ACE RATING 690

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INDY 500

ELECTRONIC ARTS pass the chequered flag with the fastest and the best driving sim ever!

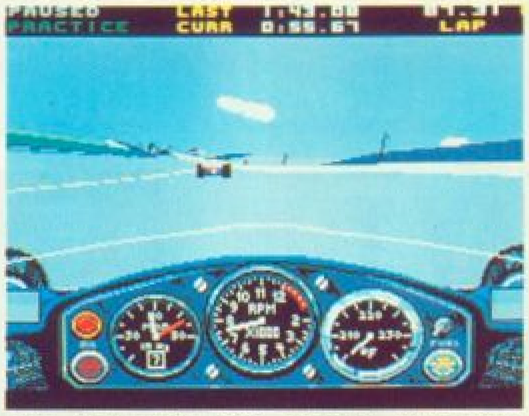
THERE have been so many racing/driving games recently (not to mention games with driving sections in them) that the prospect of yet another one is enough to evoke sighs of exasperation and despair. One look at *Indy 500* is all that it takes to turn sighs into gasps of amazement. If you thought you had seen state of the art driving simulations, then think again. *Indy 500* does for this type of game what Activision's *Bomber* did for flight simulations: revolutionises them!

As you have probably gathered by now the game is based around the world famous Indianapolis 500 race – a competition always guaranteed to provide plenty of thrills and spills. You have the option of either doing a few practise laps or qualifying for the proper race. There is also an option to race without car damage so that if you hit barriers or other cars you can still continue.

From the cockpit of your car you can see the road ahead of you in spectacular solid 3D vector graphics, as well as the road behind in your wing mirrors. Alright, we've all seen plenty of games employing solid 3D vector graphics, so whât is so special about this one? In a nutshell – speed!. It is very very fast. In fact it has to be the fastest PC driving sim ever.

The sheer feeling of being there that you get from this program is incredible – take a corner too fast and you will go sliding across the road into the barriers. Hit another car at high speed and both cars will disintegrate in a spectacular shower of debris while the wrecked bodies of the cars spin across the track. The realism gets better yet. If there is˝a crash, the wreckage does not just mysteriously disappear as it does in so many other programs, but the stranded cars will still be there when you pass them on the next lap.

RELEASE BOX		
IBM PC	£24.99dk	OUT NOW



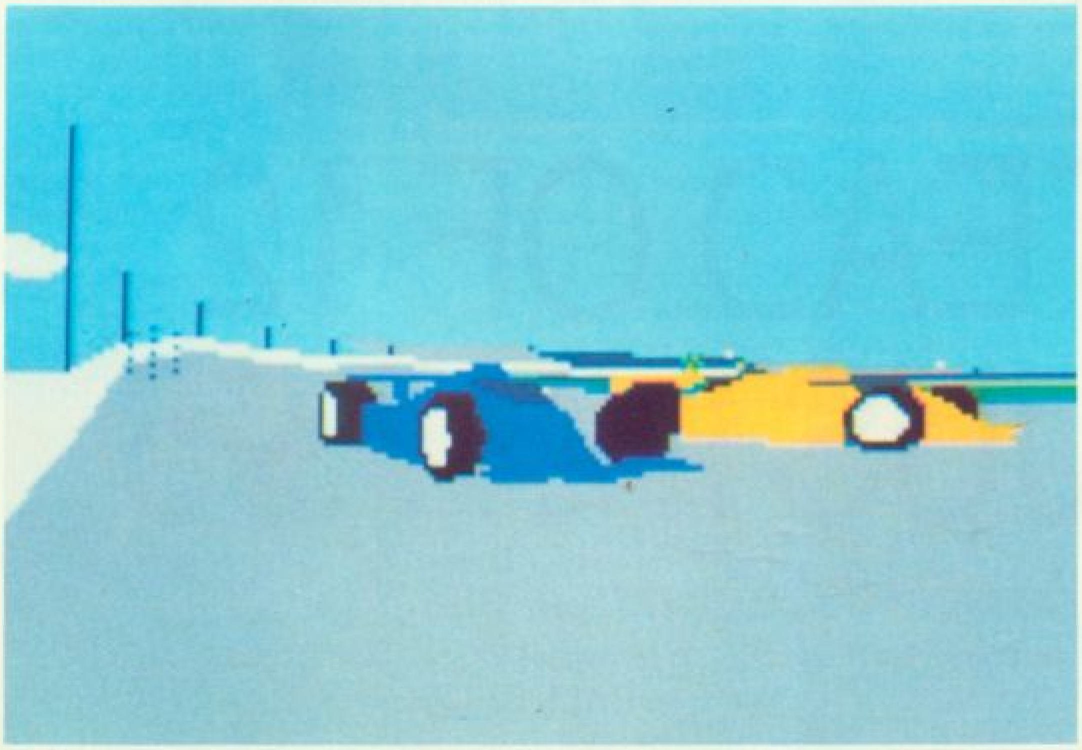
The view from the cockpit. What you can't see here is the speed!

You can interrupt the race after a crash by pressing the Escape key. You are then able to select a replay option which shows the moments leading up to the crash from a number of different viewpoints. These include television and satellite style views which allow you to see the action from above. There is another similarity here with Activision's *Bomber*, in that the replay scenes have a very similar feel to *Bomber*'s out-of-cockpit views – not strictly essential, but nevertheless a welcome feature.

Right, we've established that the game looks great, but how does it play? Well, er... great! I played it using the keyboard and found the controls to be very responsive. Having said that, the game is no doddle. It is all to easy to misjudge those corners and find yourself spinning onto the verge after attempting to take a corner too tightly. And when you spin, boy do you spin – it makes you dizzy! There is is also a danger of under steering and scraping the barrier on the outside of the track. This, more often than not, results in a blown tyre and disqualification.

Indy 500 is, without a doubt, the best racing simulation yet produced on a micro. It has all of the qualities and features that make a really good game and more besides. Even if you don't normally like this sort of game I recommend that you take a look at this one - you'll be impressed. With its tremendous graphics and bags of playability this is sure to be a clear winner.

● Laurence Scotford



A trackside view of the race: the blue car is yours – the yellow car is in trouble!

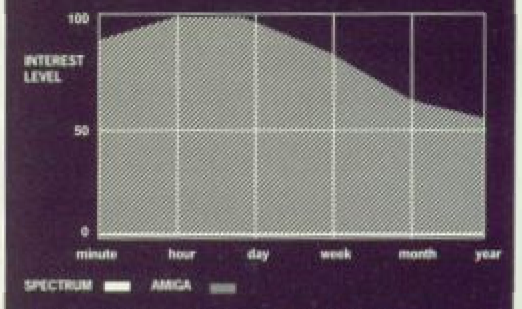
PC VERSION

If you have access to a PC or compatible, then this is one of those state-of-the-art programs, like Bomber, that you just have to have. The vector graphics will astound you, and the speed will impress you even more. Of course 386 owners will really feel the speed benefits, but don't ignore the program if you have a slower machine. On a bog-standard PC you will have to make do with the usual dying bee sounds, but the program does drive some of the add-on sound boards available for the PC if you really want a purr as you rev up. Easily one of the best PC titles to emerge this year.

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**4**
AUDIO	**6**	**FUN FAÇTOR**	**9**

ACE RATING 935

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



A spectacular game that you will not tyre of easily. (sorry 'bout that!)

TOWER OF BABEL

ACE
RATED
930
ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

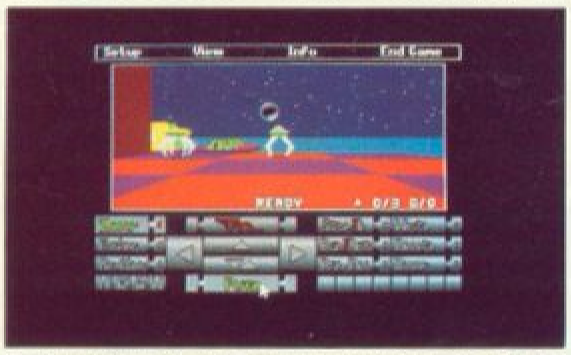
MICROPROSE cause brain-ache with their stunning 3D puzzler

PETE Cooke will be remembered as having originated some of the most original and innovative games to emerge during popular computing's first decade. *Tau Ceti*, for instance, broke new ground in terms of graphical superiority and design. It was followed by several other titles, all state-of-the-art pieces of software, and all having one thing in common: highly inventive originality.

Tower of Babel, the latest program to involve Mr.Cooke is no less stunning than any of his earlier work. Once again, it is characterised by superb hi-tech graphics, absorbing gameplay, and an imaginative scenario. In this instance the people of earth have built a tall tower for the purpose of communicating with God – the Tower of Babel. Although rather unsuccessful at attracting the attention of God, the tower did generate interest among the alien Zantorians. These benevolent beings left behind them three types of spider-like robots: Zappers, Grabbers, and Pushers.

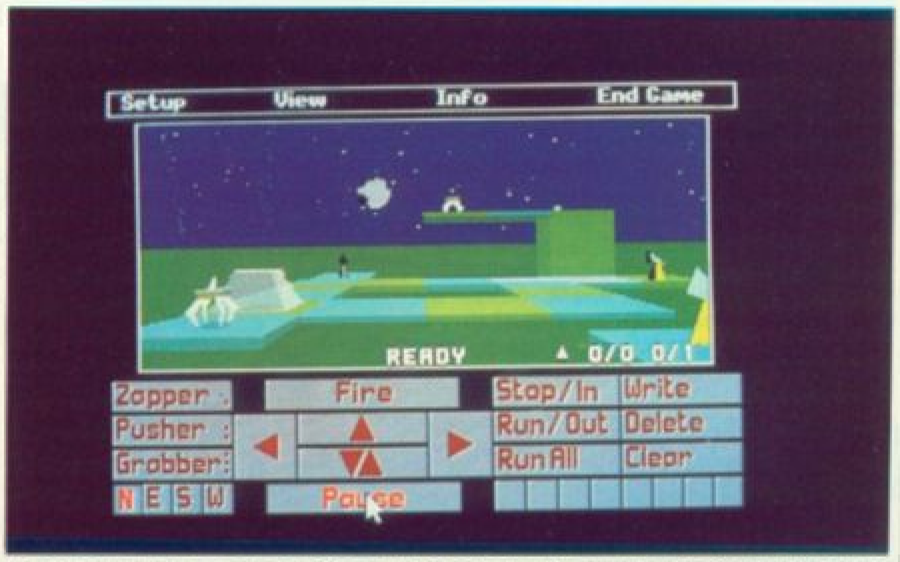
The peaceful coexistence between the inhabitants of the tower and the spiders does not last long however, and soon the Shinarians, as they are known, began to build traps to destroy the spiders. Your task is to overcome these traps and guide the spiders through the various towers in order to get them home to Zantor.

The towers are presented using extremely nice three-dimensional filled vector graphics. The towers are occupied by a variety of devices designed by the Shinarians. These range from Zappers, which fire deadly laser beams to Pushers which move any objects in line with them, and a whole host of other nasties to hamper your progress.



A view from your Zapper, showing the Grabber and Pusher. Notice the alternative control panel.

For each tower you are given a set objective, which is usually a combination of collecting Klondikes (Zantorian power packs) and destroying hostile objects. Using the mouse to access icons on a front panel you must control the spiders available to you so that the desired objective is achieved. As you might have guessed by their names, each of the spiders has a different function. The Zapper is your offensive robot, and is used for destroying other objects. The Pusher is used for moving objects around the tower, and the Grabber is for collecting Klondikes and performing various manipulative functions.



A camera-view of one of the early towers. It may look simple but you still have to pause for thought.

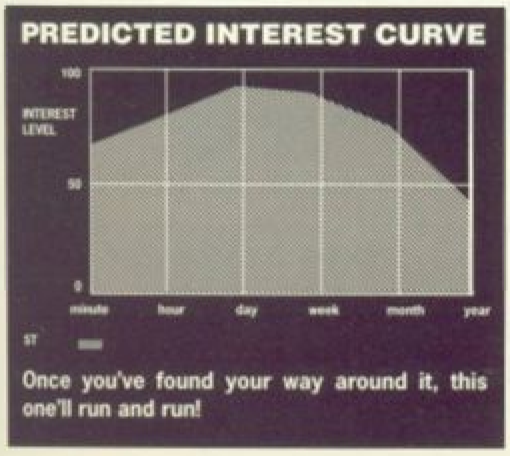
You do not have to have great arcade skills to complete any of the towers – brainwork is all that is required. Your viewpoint can be from any of the spiders or one of four cameras placed on each side of the tower. To solve a tower often requires a great deal of thought and observation before you start to move or do anything. Once you do so you may start a chain of events that cannot be stopped, and one wrong move could mean the difference between solving a tower or failing.

On the early towers it is a simple matter to move each of the spiders separately and solve it at leisure. On later towers things get a bit trickier because you have a limited amount of time to complete them. Fortunately the counter doesn't begin until you move or fire, so you have plenty of time to look round the tower and work out an initial solution to attempt. You will soon discover that moving the spiders individually is too slow and torturous a process to enable you to complete the tower in time – this is where the unique macro facility comes into play. For each spider you can prerecord a series of up to eight moves which can then be executed simultaneously to complete your objective in the allowed time.

Tower of Babel is highly original and very addictive. Its pleasant graphics and icon-driven control system make it very accessible and it should provide lasting entertainment. There's even a tower designer included so that you can have a go at creating your own puzzles. Highly recommended.

● Laurence Scotford

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Once you've found your way around it, this one'll run and run!

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£24.99	IMMINENT
AMIGA	£24.99	FEB '90
No other versions planned.		

ST VERSION

A superbly implemented game – the graphics and sound effects are just right and the gameplay is absorbing enough to keep you coming back for more. If you're an ST owner who enjoys putting the old grey matter into gear then I can confidently say that this is the best offering of its type I've seen all year. Go get it!

GRAPHICS	**9**	**IQ FACTOR**	**10**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**8**

ACE RATING 930

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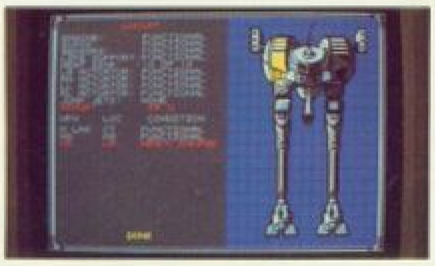
MECHWARRIOR

Battle through the 31st century with ACTIVISION

BATTLETECH is a highly successful sci-fi role-playing board game inspired by a cult Japanese cartoon series from the early 80's called Macross – satellite viewers may have seen the American version, Robotech. *Mechwarrior* is the second computer game based around Battletech – the first, *The Crescent Hawk's Inception*, was a role-player from Infocom. The new game is a fusion of role-player and simulator from American software developers Dynamix whose previous work includes *Arctic Fox*, *F14 Tomcat* and *Abrams Battle Tank*.

Set in the 31st century, Battletech sees the known universe controlled by five Successor States: House Steiner, House Kurita, House Marik, House Liao and House Davion. Each House has been battling for hundreds of years for the control of individual planets or whole planetary systems. This constant warfare has destroyed all technological advancements. A brutal regime of techno-scavenging is maintained where everybody cannibalises existing equipment in order to maintain their forces. The battlefield itself is dominated by monstrous robots known as Mechs, each as tall as a building and more powerful than a division of 20th century tanks. Enter you, as a star-wise mercenary looking for easy work with high rewards – playing one House off against the other.



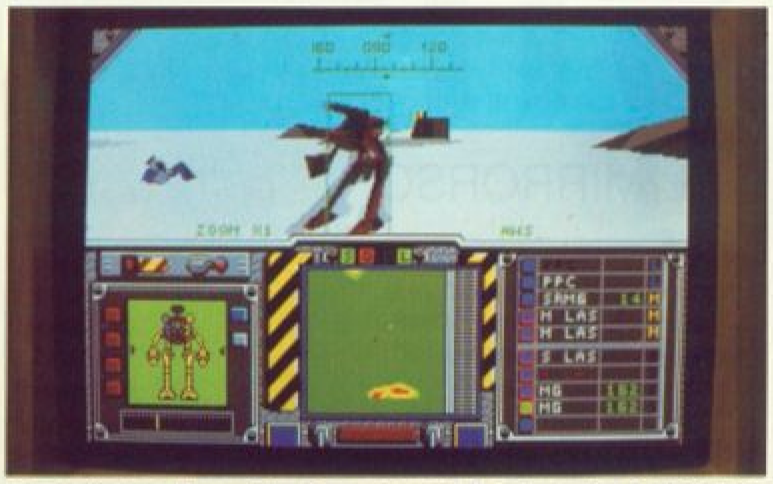
Inspecting the battle damage on your Locust Mech.

You start the game as an 18 year-old merc with a risky reputation, a badly-damaged Jenner Mech and one million credits. The gameplay is split between the icon-driven role-playing part – where you get a crew, buy equipment and negotiate a contract (mission) – and the simulation of the actual mission which is portrayed in the classic flight-simulation fashion.

First order of business (of course) is to head for the bar. There you get up to date with the local gossip and check out the local talent – potential crew talent, that is! For more detailed information about where the action is you must jack into the NewsNet Comstar news service. Once you've got the situation sussed, you'll be ready to take on a contract from one of the five Houses. You can choose from a variety of missions, from rescuing a kidnap victim to capturing an enemy base. You can even go for an extended campaign with various sub-missions – if you can handle it.

Obviously you must take note of how each House feels about you: after all, if you've just busted up a Steiner military complex their unlikely to offer you a very lucrative deal for your next mission! Negotiation is the name of the game here, don't accept your first offer, haggle a little and you might be pleasantly surprised. And if you don't like what's on offer you can also jump to another planet or solar system. Finally it's down to the fun bit, sorting out your Mech and then sorting out your opponent...

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£TBA	TBA
AMIGA	£TBA	TBA
IBM PC	£24.99dk	OUT NOW



Up against a Marauder: the meanest Mech on the battlefield. The pile of junk in the background used to be one of your crew members piloting a Jenner Mech – before the Marauder piled in with its twin Magna Hellstar PPCs and GM Whirlwind autocannon. (Don't worry about the motion blur – we didn't use the pause key)

Visiting the on-planet Mech complex allows you to buy, sell, reload or repair your complement of Mechs, which can range from one to four.

Mechwarrior supports up to eight Mechs: from the 20-ton recon Locust to the heavy duty Battlemaster, weighing in at a cool 85 tons. Each Mech has its own strengths and weaknesses – as you'll find out in the heat of the action. Talking of heat – this is the single most important factor when piloting a Mech. Every time you fire a weapon or get hit your Mech heats up. When the temperature rises beyond a certain level your Mech will start to malfunction until it actually shuts-down.

The mission itself is portrayed from inside your Mech's cockpit – like a flight-simulation – with a solid 3D real-time environment processed through the viewscreen. Among the facilities available to you are radar and map sensors, damage scanners and weapon stats. You really feel you're there – thanks to accurate and realistic representations of the Mechs and the many different planet-scapes.

During play I started with a light-weight Locust, but I made up for my lack of power with particularly vicious tactics. The great thing about the Locust is it's immense staying power – you can continually pump your twin Sperry/Browning machine guns and medium Martell laser without having to worry about your heat build-up. Another great tactic I used was steaming up to my opponent's Mech and letting 'em have it full blast into their legs – most Mechs have ineffectual close-range weaponry. They who dare – win! I even managed to knock out two Marauders in one mission with this tactic – picking up a hefty reward into the bargain. One of the most important things to note and master is issuing orders to your Lance. Your crew can be tricky – you might send them to attack a Battlemaster, they might have different ideas.

Mechwarrior had me hooked right from the start, it's a near perfect fusion of flight- (tank!) simulation and role-playing game. Seek and succumb.

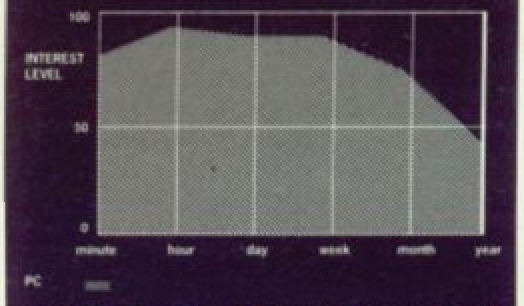
● Rik Haynes

PC VERSION

The visuals throughout *Mechwarrior* are expertly drawn, with full CGA, EGA and Tandy 16 graphics modes support. The sim's filled vectors move along at a fair pace even on an 8MHz-baby. Although the Roland MT-32 and Ad Lib sound cards are supported they haven't been implemented very well – at least the in-sim sound spot effects are functional and do the business. The worst aspect of the audio are the appalling soundtracks that crop up during the game. *Mechwarrior* will not only appeal to fans of the board game, but also deserves a look from any self-respecting role-game or simulation player.

GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 7
AUDIO 3 FUN FACTOR 9
ACE RATING 887

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Absorbing fusion of flight-sim and role-player – an absolute must for *Battletech* fans

CHAOS STRIKES BACK

ACE
RATED
945
ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

FTL/MIRRORSOFT finally bring relief to starved Dungeon Masters

THIS is the moment that thousands of *Dungeon Master* fans have been holding their breath for – *Chaos Strikes Back* has finally arrived. The question that will now be on the lips of all those fanatics is: was it worth the wait? So let me put you all out of your misery right now and let you know the answer: most definitely *YES!*

The first thing to point out about *Chaos* is that it has been produced as a stand alone product, so you can still use it even if you don't have the original *Dungeon Master* disk. You don't even have to have a saved game disk with characters who have worked through *Dungeon Master*, although you will find *Chaos* twice as difficult without them.

Chaos Strikes Back actually comes on two disks: the game disk and a utility disk. The utility disk is something that *DM* fans won't be familiar with, but you will take to the idea immediately. As well as containing an animated sequence that introduces the module it also contains a character editor. This allows you to load up your saved characters and review them. There is also a picture editor with which you can change your character's appearance to suit the way you imagine them to be. You may also change their names as you wish.

Aside from this function, the utility disc is also used to create the saved game that you must begin *Chaos Strikes Back* with. This process allows you to use your existing *DM* party but strips them of all their possessions first.

If you don't have any characters from the first *DM* game you can select the prison option on the main game disk. This allows you to enter the Hall of Mirrors and select a new party from the images captured there. The characters available are a lot more powerful than those that were available at the start of *Dungeon Master*, but don't get too excited – *Chaos* is not a quest for greenhorns. At one stage while I was wandering through the halls I managed to stumble down a stairway into a darkened chamber full of mummies who made short work of the characters I had just resurrected. I still haven't figured out quite what happened, but it's something to watch out for!

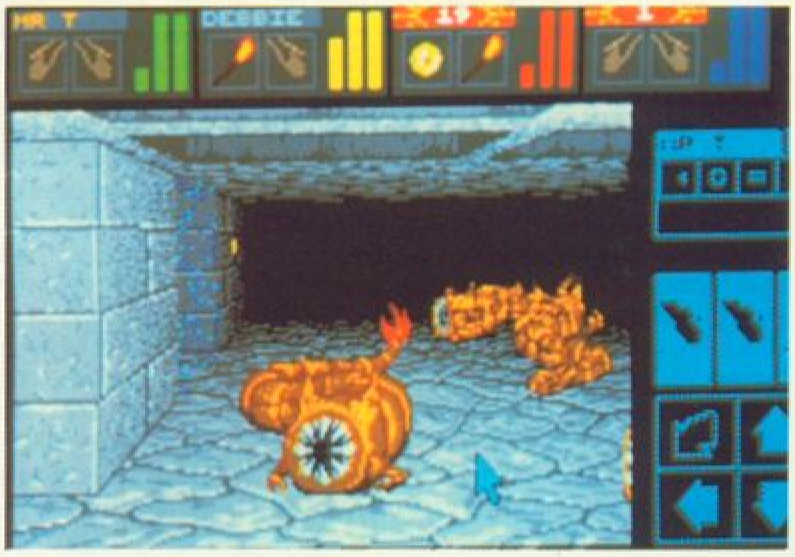
Once you have created a new saved game with your characters, you can load up the game disk and begin. If you are anticipating a nice gentle start to *Chaos* you can forget it right now. As the game begins you find yourself in a huge unlit chamber. There are half a dozen hungry poisonous worms heading straight for you. You're unarmed and the only exit is locked. What now? Well, unless you're pretty good at thinking on your feet the answer is going to be a particularly nasty death.

The message here is quite clearly that *Chaos Strikes Back* is a game for experienced *Dungeon Master* players rather than anyone who is new to the system. So if you haven't played *Dungeon Master*, then why not give that a try before you tackle this module? You'll soon see what you've been missing!

In case you think that *Chaos* might be a bit too daunting for anyone with a brain smaller than a planet, don't worry – even if you get completely stuck, help is at hand. For here we come to the final application of the *Chaos* Utility disk – a hint oracle. When you select the hint oracle it reads your saved position and determines where you are in the dungeon. It will then provide you with a number of clues for that level, together with descriptions of the creatures you can expect to encounter. This system works well because it is entirely up to you how many hints you see, and consequently, how much is given away by the oracle.

As far as presentation is concerned *Chaos* looks much the same as the original *Dungeon Master*. The similarity, however, is only superficial – in terms of challenge and atmosphere, *Chaos* is streets ahead of its prequel . Find that hard to believe? Just try it and see. When you've got this out of the shrinkwrap and fired up, you'll know the wait was worth every minute. Unreservedly recommended to all those who fell in love with the first game and are now looking for something more to rekindle their interest.

● Laurence Scotford



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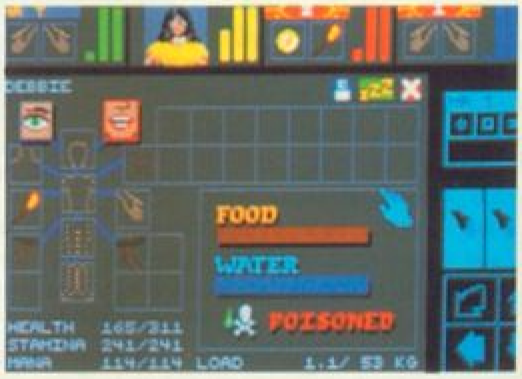

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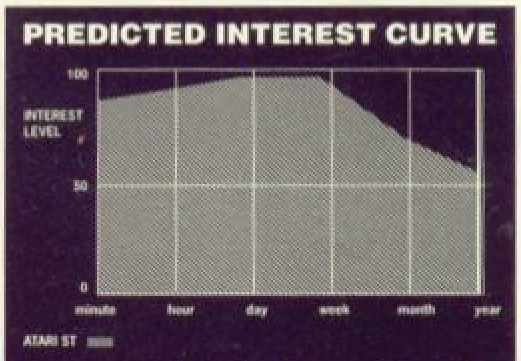
ATARI ST VERSION

There isn't really any substantial change in the graphics in this version, and the sound is limited to the usual spot effects (although they are all very competently done – just listen to those haunting screams when you snuff it). But the original *DM* graphics and sound managed to convey a tremendous atmosphere, and the same is true of *Chaos*. What is more important though is that FTL haven't let us down on the gameplay front. I guarantee that this game will have thousands of ST owners burning the midnight oil as they attempt to shake off the dreadful worms or solve the excruciatingly mind-boggling puzzles. Brilliant stuff!

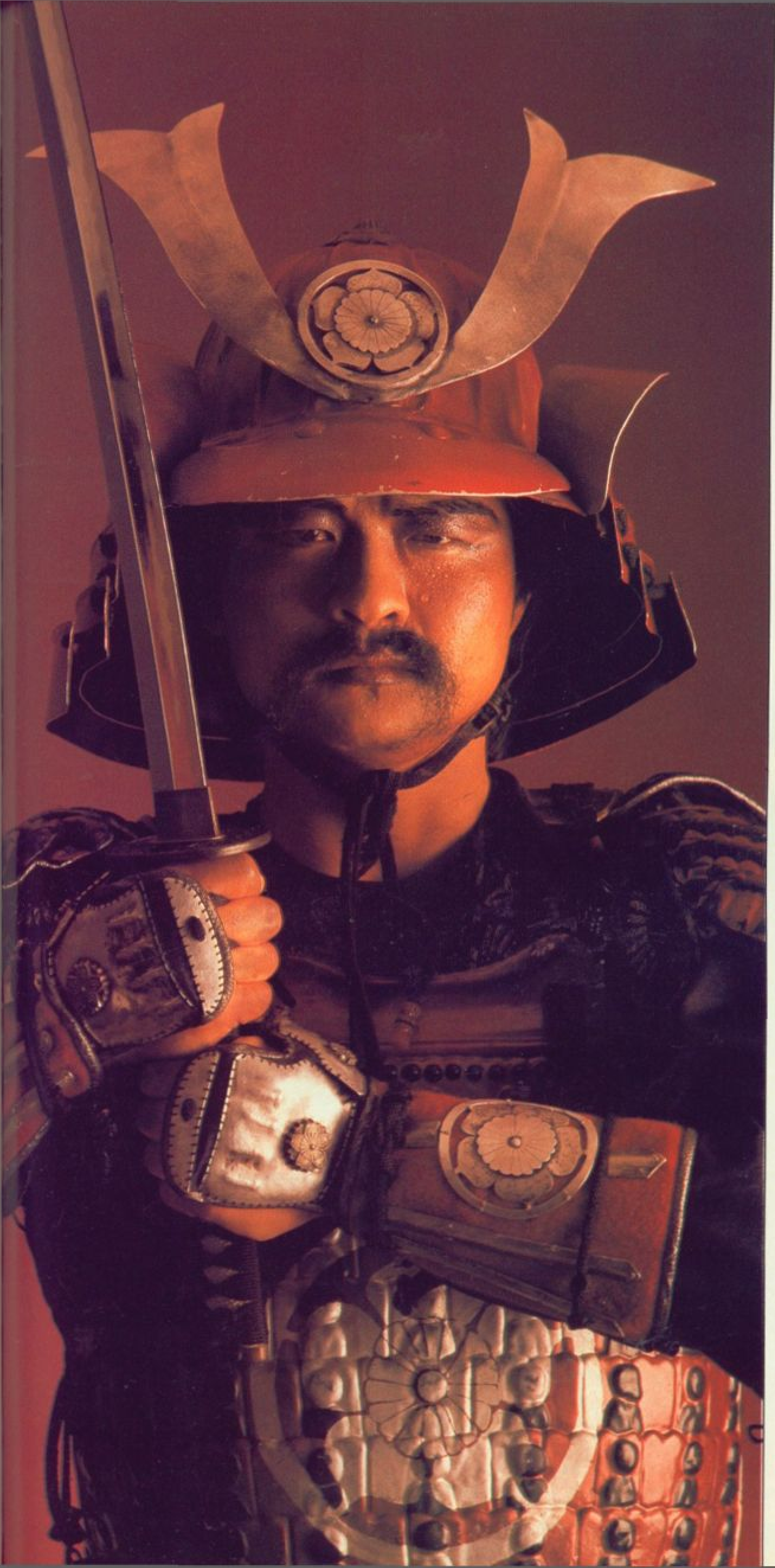
GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**8**
AUDIO	**7**	**FUN FACTOR**	**9**

ACE RATING 945

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



People are still playing *Dungeon Master* fervently. I don't expect anything less from *Chaos Strikes Back!*



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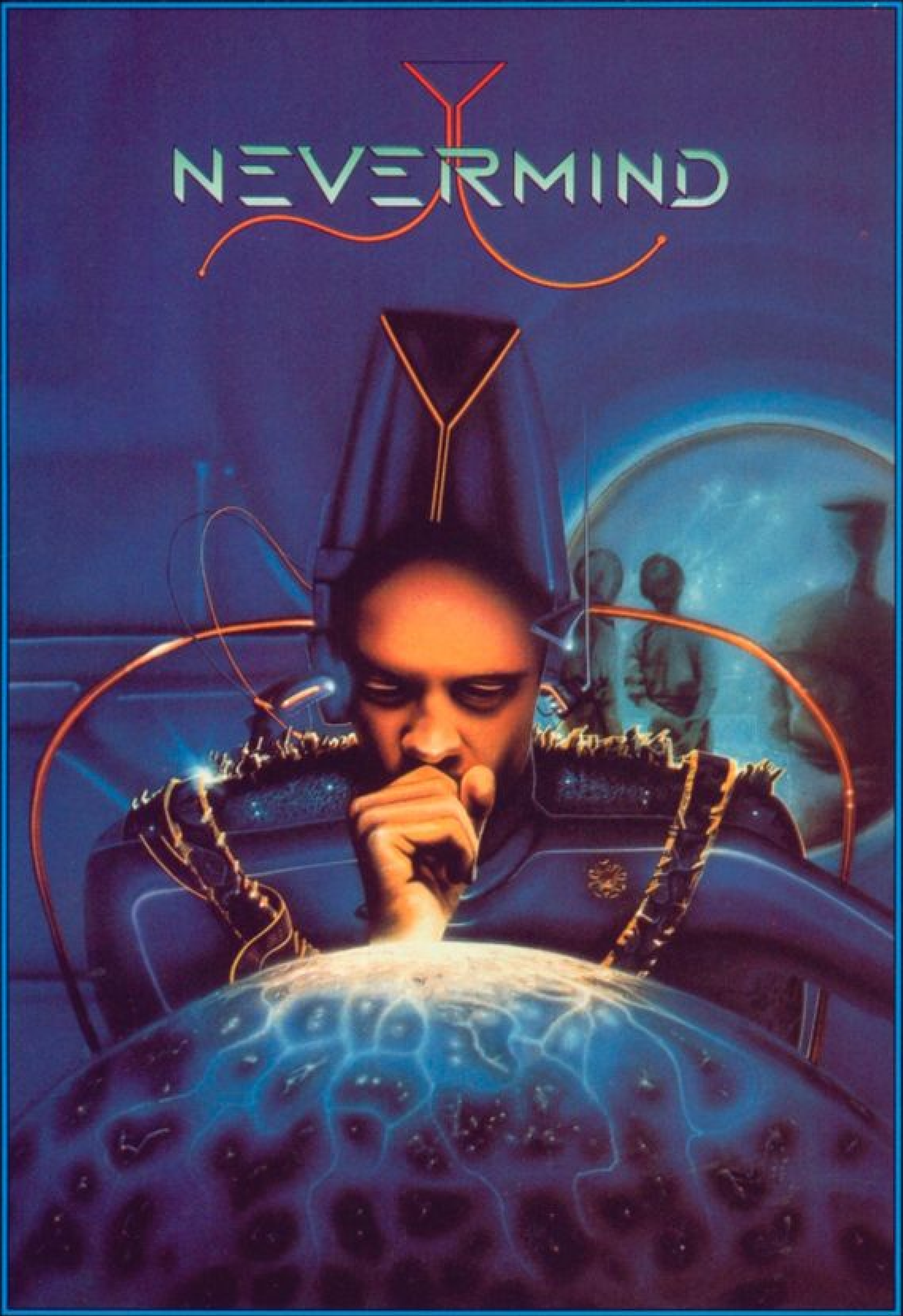

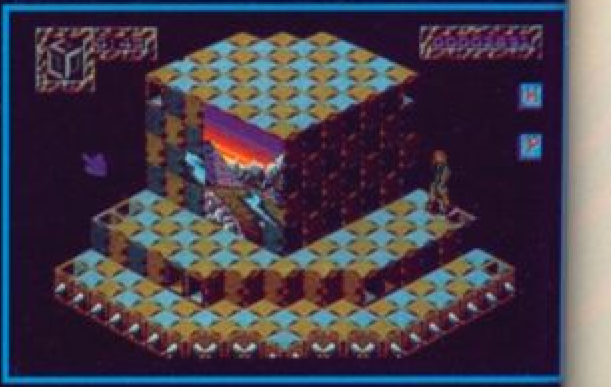

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Screen Shots taken from the Amiga and PC Versions

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PSYCLAPSE

PSYGNOSIS
GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

BAD COMPANY

LOGOTRON send in the heavy mob

LOGOTRON introduce to you the meanest, roughest, toughest eight aliens of death since the ACE review team had their Weetabix. The action takes place in deepest space where the 'Commander' is putting his new recruits through their paces – on a mission to destroy the alien lifeforms on four distant planets.

You select your warrior from a Speedball-style rogues gallery which shows you a mug shot of each and provides a brief biography. The favourite choice is Athena de Santez – who is low on strength and stamina but is very agile and therefore good at dodging the flak. If you don't fancy her there is Lance 'Flash' Gordon, Leroy 'Shades' Henriksen, Stefan 'Ironside' Hunter, Met Steinberg, Chronos Warchild, Sandi Kalishnov, and Bruce 'Maniac' North.

In practice your choices are pretty academic as once you start blasting the weird collection of aliens that inhabit the four levels of *Bad Company* success depends more on your own reflexes than on anything else. There is no strategic element involved in the options – apart from the inability of some of them to carry the heavier weapons. Even this doesn't matter too much as whatever weapon you grab can be bolstered by gathering the power ups.

But if the selection of warriors has little bearing on the game it does at least provide atmosphere – something *Bad Company* is strong on. Its colourful 3D scrolling terrain moves backwards as well as forwards and features a unique patterned floor surface.

At first glance *Bad Company* looks a lot like *Space Harrier* but it does have one important difference – your warriors stay on the ground. Four levels of play offer a variety of challenges, terrains, and aliens and any of the four can be selected right at the beginning of the game. There is no need to reach the end of a level before progressing to the next. You decide for yourself when you feel you are ready to go onto a tougher level and make that choice at the beginning of the game.

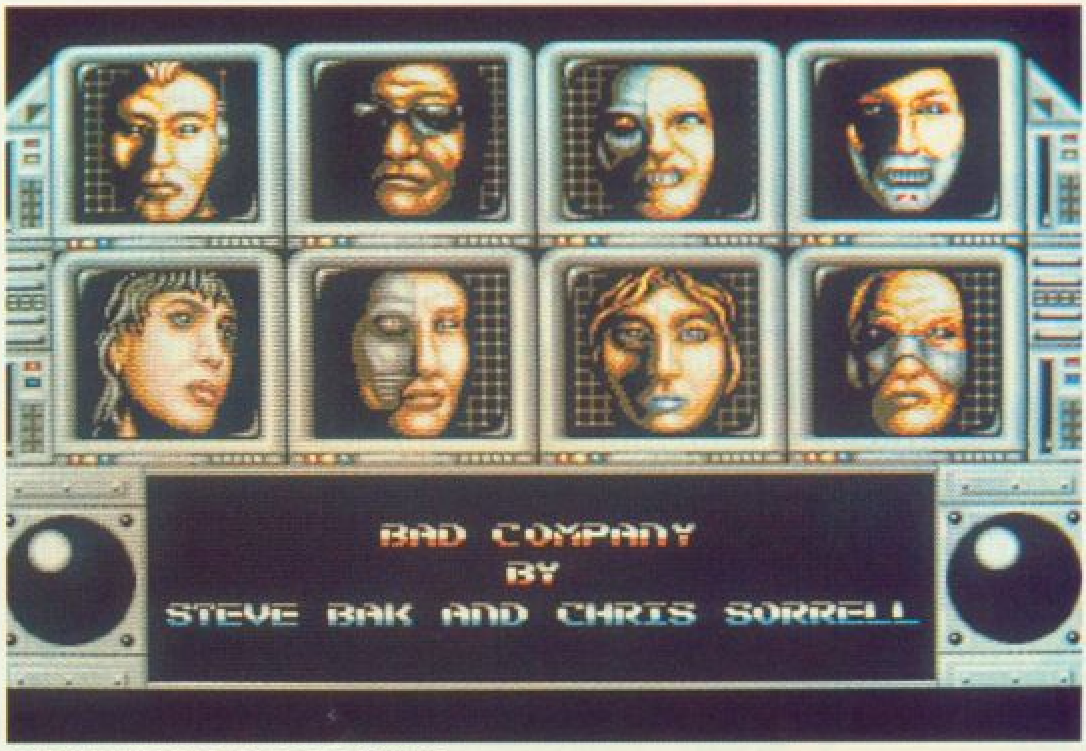
The four levels feature some impressive aliens – particularly the bug eyes, Jelly fish, and toadstools. Grabbing power ups and wasting things is fun – particularly when you are well tooled and the larger nasties appear on level four. These are difficult to kill and there is a considerable sense of achievement if you can register enough direct hits and avoid their laser fire for long enough to make them falter.

The action takes place in a central window flanked by two displays which show you the weapon you are currently holding. You can switch between weapons to try out their respective strengths and weaknesses on various targets by tapping he space bar.

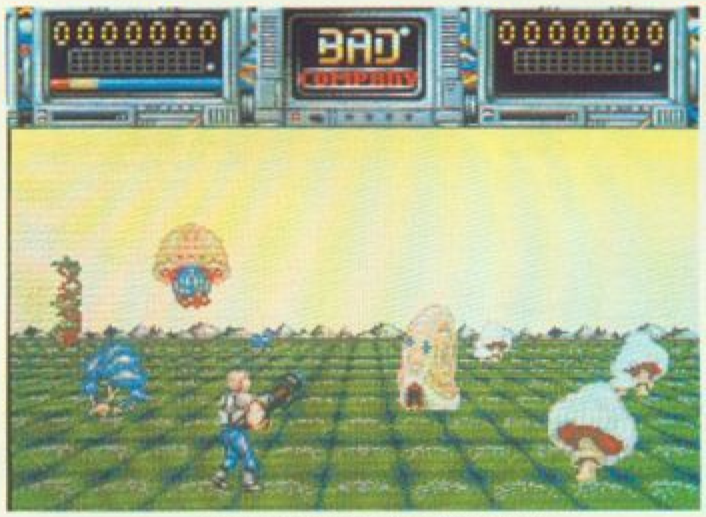
Additional weapons are dropped down by your command ship, which also beams you down into the game in an impressive opening sequence. As you absorb flak from your shield energy is reduced and you will need to walk into one of the electric showers left at convenient intervals for you by your command ship, regenerating your weapons and shields.

The only problem with *Bad Company* is there is not enough to it. It is over-reliant on graphics and effects to provide the game challenge. At least in *Space Harrier* there was the end of level dragons and the desire to complete levels progressively. Bad Company lacks an overriding objective or series of mini-objectives to sustain interest. Pretty and all as it is you soon tire of the simple pleasure of wasting things.

Eugene Lacey



The Heavy Gang - Choose a Warrior



Aliens hide behind the walls

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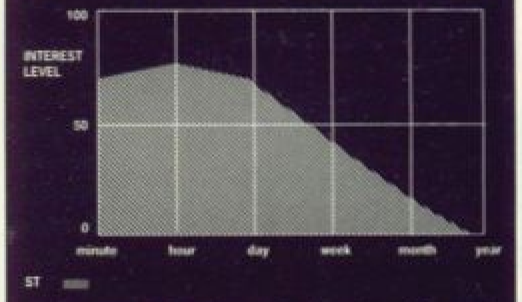
ST VERSION

Technically excellent. Steve Bak's graphics and animation are colourful, fast, and imaginative – from the characterisation of the warriors right down to the minutest detail on the nasties. Everything has obviously had a great deal of attention. The David Whittaker sound track and FX are also difficult to fault. The whole package deserved a bit more effort in the design department.

GRAPHICS	**8**	**IQ FACTOR**	**6**
AUDIO	**8**	**FUN FACTOR**	**6**

ACE RATING 620

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Very pretty. Sounds good, too, but ultimately lacks the depth to keep you coming back for more.

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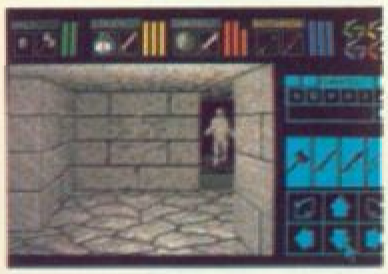
DUNGEON MASTER

– The TNT Serial Part One



Les Rigden – a major fan of FTL's *Dungeon Master* (aren't we all?) has compiled what must be the ultimate guide to that game. It's a huge tome, but it does provide all you DM's out there with all the information you are likely to need. TNT will be publishing as much of the guide as we can in serial form over the next few months. If you just can't wait, however, Les will provide you with a printed copy of the guide for a pound, to cover the cost of paper and printer ribbons. Alternatively, if you are an ST owner, send him a blank disk and suitable return postage and packing, and Les will copy the file for you, along with a copy of *ST Writer* with which to read it. What a service eh? Send your money, disks, thanks, etc. to:

Les Rigden,
25 Sommerville Close,
Faversham,
Kent.
ME13 8HP.

Well, that's enough from me, now on with the first installment.

The Guide to the Dungeon

WEAPONS

FALCHION – To be found. Skeletons drop these when killed.
RAPIER – One to be found.
SABRE – Two to be found.
SWORD – To be found. Chaos Knights drop these when killed.
DELTA – One to be found on a room in level 8.
HARD CLEAVE – One to be found on level 10. Does extra damage.
DIAMOND EDGE – One to be found on level 11. Does extra damage.
INQUISITOR – One to be found on level 7. +2 to Mana & Extra damage.
VORPAL BLADE – Two to be found. +4 to Mana & Disrupt Spell.
AXE – One to be found on level 4, also carried by Stamm if you choose him.
SAMURAI SWORD – Carried by ladio if you choose him.
BOLT BLADE – Fires lightning bolts also used as a sword. Limited in number of bolts. Found on level 11.
FURY – As above but fires fire balls. Found on level 11.
FLAMITT – One to be found on level 13. Fires fireballs but is limited.
STORM RING – One to be found on level 9. Fires lightning bolts but is limited.
STONE CLUBS – Dropped by Stone Golems when killed. Level 7.
CLUB – To be found. Blue Ogres drop them when killed. Halk carries one if you choose him.
BOW – One to be found on level 4. Fires arrows and slayers.
CROSS BOW – One to be found on level 6. Fires arrows and slayers.
SPEEDBOW – One to be found on level 10. Fires arrows and slayers faster than crossbow.
SLING – One to be found on level 3. Launches small rocks.
THROWING STARS – Approx. 6 to be found. Wutse carries 3 if you choose her.
POISON DARTS – Approx. 5 to be found.
ARROWS – Six to be found.
SLAYERS – Four to be found.
SMALL ROCKS – For use with sling. Found on levels 2 & 3.
MORNINGSTAR – Two to be found on levels 11 & 12.
MACE – One to be found.
MACE OF ORDER – One to be found on level 8.
FUL BOMBS – Many to be found throughout levels.
VEN BOMBS – As Above. Can also be made using magic.
BLUE MAGIC BOXES – Found in numerous places. Freezes life for a short while.
GREEN MAGIC BOXES – As Above, but for a greater time.

WANDS AND STAFFS

WAND – Calm, Spellshield, Heal. Found in the 'Vault' level 3.
DRAGON SPIT – +7 to Mana. Found on level 7.
FIRESTAFF – Brandish or Swing.
FIRESTAFF + POWER GEM – +1 Wizard Level, +2 Priest levels, Invoke, Fuse, Fluxcage. Invoke produces either Fireball, Cloud of Poison, or Lump of Poison.
SCEPTRE OF LYFE – +5 to Mana, Heals & Light. Found on Level 7.
SNAKE STAFF – +8 to Mana & Heals, Calm. Found on Level 12.
STAFF OF CLAWS – +4 to Mana.
STAFF OF MANA – +10 to Mana & Dispell Spell, Fireshield. Found on Level 10.
TEO WAND – +6 to Mana & Calm Spell, Spellshield, Fireshield.
YEW STAFF – +4 to Mana & Dispell Spell, Light. Found on Levels 6 & 9.

Many of the above items also contain an option to hit.

NECKLACES

FERAL PENDANT – +1 Wizard Level.
ILLUMULET – Two to be found. Provide Light.
MOONSTONE – +3 to Mana. Chani also carries one.
THE HELLION – No apparent use.
EKKHARD CROSS – No apparent use.
GEM OF AGES – 2 to be found. No apparent use.
JEWAL SYMBOL – No apparent use.

OTHER VALUABLES

ORANGE GEM – No use.
GREEN GEM – No use.
BLUE GEM – Opens door on level three.
GOLD, SILVER, & COPPER COINS – Open various doors and

ACE 74

The Poor Man's Guide to AD&D and BARD'S TALE

Colin Taylor from Anfield, Liverpool has sent me an absolutely huge list of pokes for the C64, which is unfortunately too long to reproduce here, but thank's all the same Colin. He also provides this unusual tip for poor adventurers. The tip allows you to easily duplicate items and money, and will work for *Pools of Radiance*, and *Bard's Tale*, and possibly with *Bard's Tale 2 & 3* and the rest of the AD&D series.

```
Bard's Tale
BRIAN THE FIST has
these options this
battle round:

(P)arty attack
(D)efend
(U)se item
Select option.

Party
Character Name   AC Hits Cond SpPt Cl
```

You first need three disks – your save game disk plus two more blank ones. We shall call the blank disks rich and poor.

Load your saved game and remove all the characters one by one onto all three disks. (This may mean reloading the saved game).

Now, we shall call your party Mr.A, Mr.B, Mr.C, Mr.D, etc.

Mr.A has, for instance, a long sword +3.

Trade the sword to Mr.B then remove Mr.A to the Poor Disk.

Reload Mr.A from the Rich disk and trade sword to Mr.C, and so on with the rest of the party.

When all your men have everything they require then save the game to the save game disk – and that's it!

Another hint when playing AD&D. When creating a character do not choose a female or an elf. *(Sexist and racist huh?)*. Females are too weak and elves can't be reincarnated after a run in with undead. *(Do you realise how much hate mail I'm going to receive from female elves after printing that?!)*

BATMAN – THE MOVIE

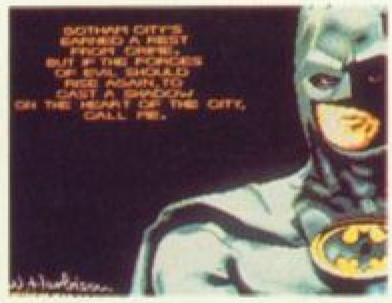
This month's megatip comes from one of our regular contributors, sci-fi author, **Adam Morley from Leicester**. I know that there are a lot of people out there who have become hooked on Ocean's great game, *Batman – The Movie*, and there must be many who are anxious for a little help, especially with the later sections. For all those people, Adam has compiled some hints and tips for all the sections, as well as maps for the Axis Chemical Plant (Level One), and Gotham Cathedral (Level Five). O.K. That's enough waffle from me - here we go.

Level One

Level one is quite simple after a bit of practice, and requires you to traverse the Axis Chemical Plant from left to right, where you should meet and defeat Jack Napier.

Along the way you will meet Napier's grenade throwing heavies, who, given the chance, will deplete your strength swiftly. If you reach a part where they are above you, walk directly beneath them; this way they can never hit you. Use your "Batrope" to go up underneath them, and then dispatch them with your "Batarang". If you come face to face with them, fire and retreat, or wait until they throw a grenade, walk towards them and fire: with any luck the grenade will go over your head. The other gun-wielding mobsters should be shot or jumped on as soon as you see them, (It's actually quite a good idea to fire your Batarang ocassionally as you walk along).

The acid drops and gas jets can also deplete your strength quickly, and must be searched for and avoided carefully. In general, step under the first drop after it has fallen, wait for the second to fall, and then walk forwards again. To get past gas jets you must simply time your moves correctly. When you come to the six leaking pipes, wait until the nearest pipe has emitted an acid droplet, flick out your Batrope diagonally to the right and push up hard on your joystick; this should carry you upwards without too much damage. When you reach the last section of the maze, go upwards, and fire a Batarang at Jack. He should then fall into the acid vat.

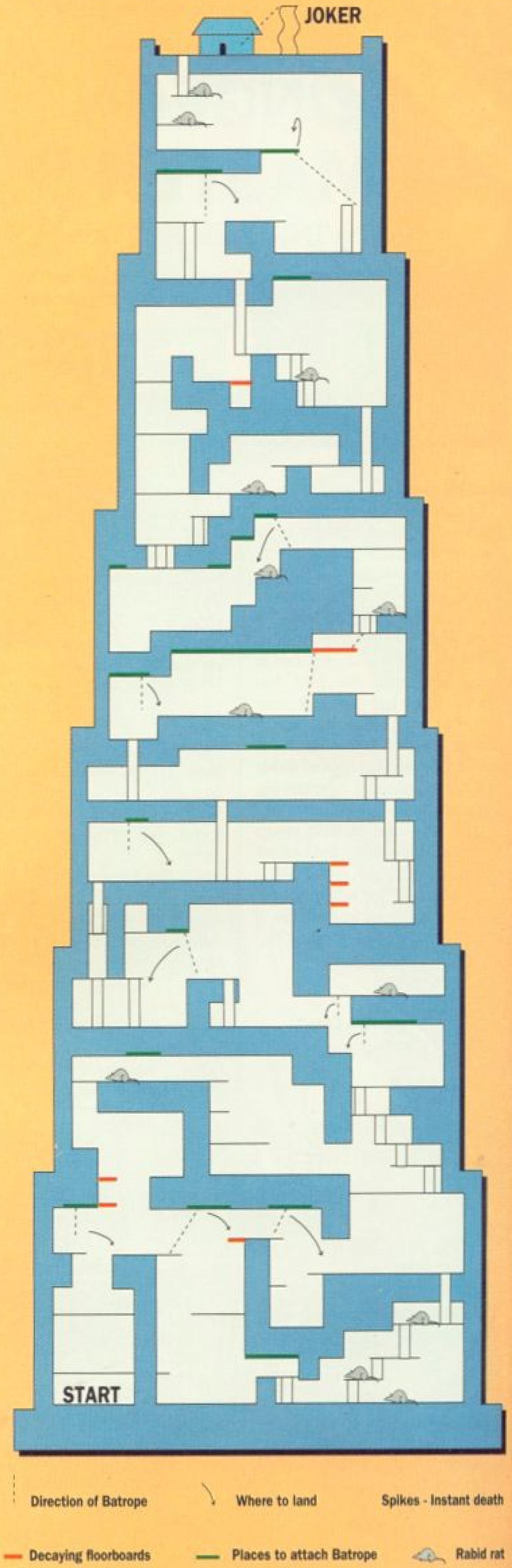

GOTHAM CITY'S
EARNED A REST
FROM CRIME,
BUT IF THE FORCES
OF EVIL SHOULD
RISE AGAIN, TO
CAST A SHADOW
ON THE HEART OF THE CITY,
CALL ME.

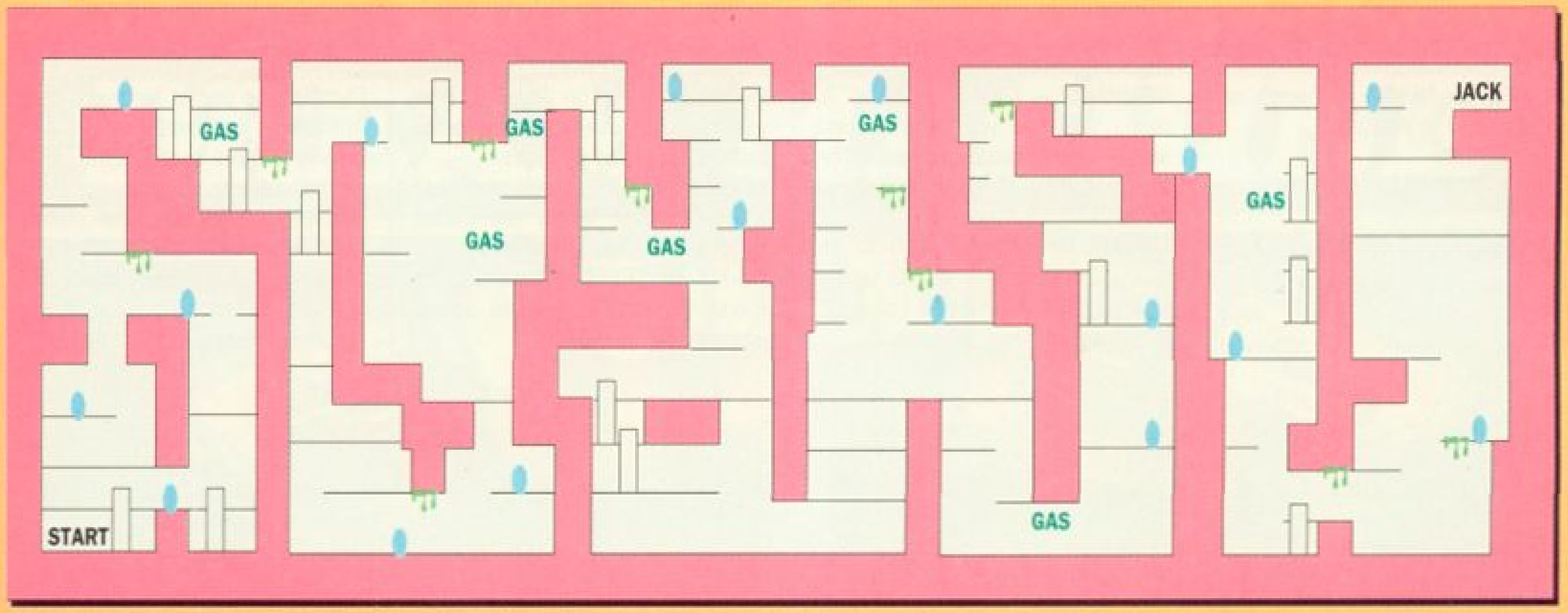
Level Two

This level is one of the most difficult and requires a certain amount of driving skill. In order to negotiate it successfully stay roughly in the middle of the road at a little less than full speed, saving some accelleration to move left and right past the cars in front. Drift to the inside of bends and accellerate round them; this will cause you to drift back out towards the middle of the road. Don't be afraid to stamp on the brakes to avoid trouble; crashing costs more time than slowing down and causes you damage.

When a turn comes up, indicated by the red arrow, don't panic: you have three attempts before being stopped by the police road-block. If another car blocks your first chance to turn off, go round it and move into position for the next. To make sure of turning, flick out the Batmobile's grapnel a second or so before you reach the lampost on

Level 5 Gotham Cathedral

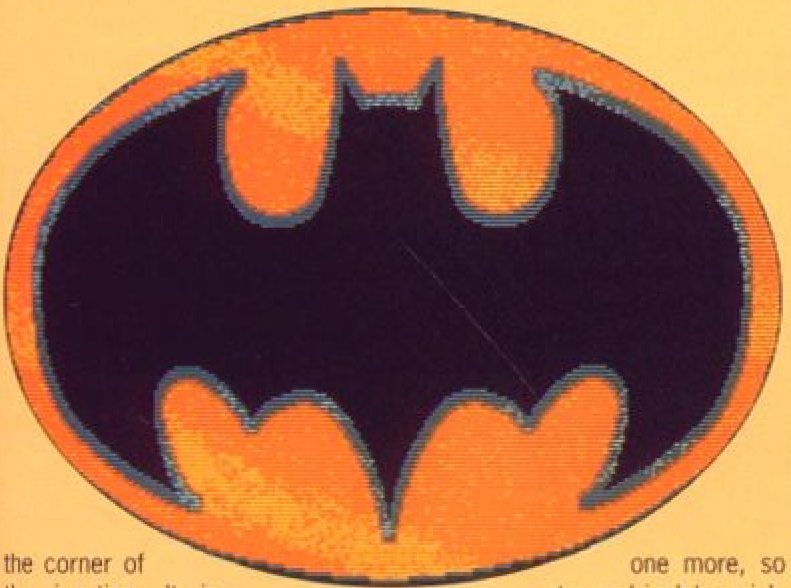




Level 1 Axis Chemical Plant

● Grenade throwers

Acid droplets



the corner of the junction. It is better in terms of time, if you can complete two in one go, but if this proves too hard, make sure you at least pass the fifty mile mark. Then, if you loose a life, you will start again only fifty miles away from the Batcave.

Level Three

Here you have sixty seconds to select the correct three objects out of eight which form "Smilex".

To do this choose the first three objects from the left hand column and check how many you have right. Then take one object from the first three and add two more from those which remain. Check the number that are correct and try to determine which objects are the right ones out of the two rows of three. Put these together and add a third item, (if required); continue until you get the right answer.

If your first row of three scores 0 or 1, choose three new items, ignoring those previously chosen. A score of 0 is particularly helpful in that it cuts down your options to five items, and therefore makes things much easier. A score of 2 means you only need one more, so try and isolate quickly which two are correct.

The three objects seem to be selected by the computer at random from those available, but some occur in the solution more often than others, (Soap almost never appears!). If you number the items, starting at the top of the lefthand column, from 1 to 8, the frequency in which they appear seems to be; 4,3,7,2,6,1,5,8.

Level Four

If you keep a cool head and a steady hand, level four should prove relatively easy. Fly the "Batwing" at between 102-111 mph and try to stay at a more or less contstant height above the ground. Hit the ropes holding the ballooons as close to the middle as possible and as soon as you have cut one free, look ahead towards the next, (It helps to anticipate where the next balloon might be, and so move accordingly).

Try to avoid hitting the bases, as these slow you down as well as damaging you. Missing one or two balloons is fairly harmless, unless you make a habit of it, as is popping the odd one. Many of the balloons can be cut free from a steady height, but there are those which require you to duck and dive a bit. Some forethought and a lot of early movement should avoid an explosive ending for your "Batwing", (as with the Batmobile section, if you manage to get past fifty balloons but can't make it to the end, you will start again with only fifty balloons to set free).

Level Five

Set inside Gotham Cathedral, this is the final and most difficult level containing hordes of the Joker's mad henchmen, crumbling floors, wicked spikes, and wabid wats!

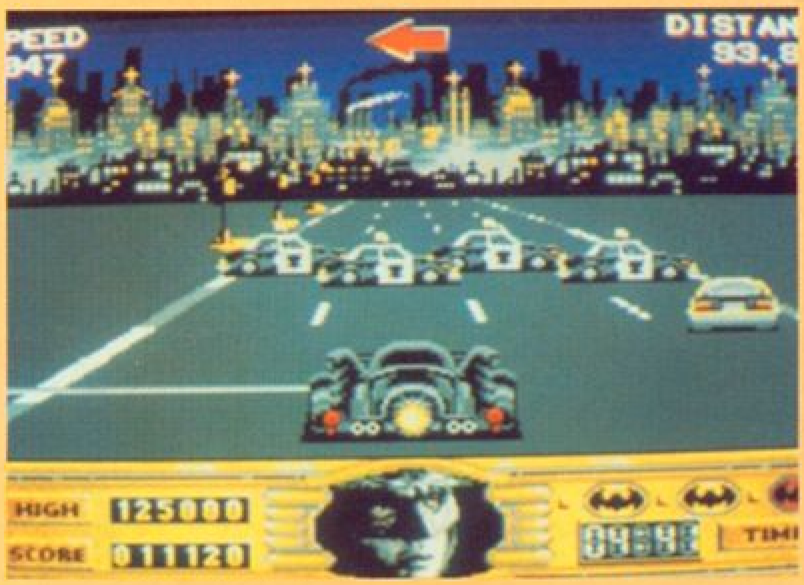
To reach the joker you must negotiate the multitude of dangers and work your way from floor to floor towards the top. There are several routes to take, but they all, ultimately, lead in the same direction, (some, however, are more perilous than others).

The rats are troublesome but can be avoided with care and the quick use of the Batrope. In this level the Batrope comes into its own, as you need to use it to swing across gaps in the floor and make it from one level to another, or just to avoid those dirty little rats. the Jokers henchmen should be dealt with as in the first level. they are more trigger happy here and must be dealt with quickly.

At the top of the cathedral you will see something like a small house with a door at the centre. Walk a little way past this and flick out your Batrope diagonally upwards towards the rope ladder which leads to a waiting helicopter. If you have timed it right you should hit the Joker and knock him off, making him fall rather a long way to the ground below – SPLAT!!!

Map of Level Five

The map shows quite clearly the passages and ladders leading from the bottom of the cathedral to the top. Crumbling floorboards and spikes are shown in red. Also shown is the route which I think is easiest, complete with places to swing and land. The dotted line shows how to shoot out the Batrope and the arrow shows where to land. The position of the various rats is also shown.



☞72 secret panels.

CROWN CALISTA – Found on level 14. No use.

CROWN OF NERRA – Found on level 7. +10 to Wisdom.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

CORBAMITE – Found on levels 9 & 7. Opens a door on level 9.

CHOKER – Found on level 5. Also carried by Sonja. No apparent use.

MAGNIFIER – Found on Level 10. Opens secret door on level 11.

COMPASS – Found on level 3. Helps you find your way around some unmappable rooms: The Matrix (Level 3) & beginning of Level 10.

MIRROR OF DAWN – Two to be found, Levels 3 & 5. Opens secret room in "Chambers of the Guardian" on level 3.

RABBITT'S FOOT – 3 to be found. Increase your luck during combat. Also carried by Boris.

ROPE – Found on level 9. Not essential but useful for exploring pits. Also carried by Leyla.

HORN OF FEAR – Found at end of level 4. When blown will cause water elementals to retreat.

BOOTS OF SPEED – 4 pairs to be found. Increase movement speed when worn.

SCROLLS – Read all scrolls that you find. They offer important clues.

Right, that's yer lot for this month. In the next installment we will print details of more useful items, experience levels, spells, potions, beasts, combat tips and characters. So if you don't want to be left as monster fodder, make sure you get next month's issue of your favourite computer monthly.

CONSOLE ● CORNER

SEGA SENSATIONS

Just to keep Sega owners happy, here are a whole load of tips and tricks to keep you going well into 1990.

VIGILANTE

Daniel Ebstein of London explains that to gain access to all five levels, all you have to do is press the top left corner of the controller and then press the start button.

R-TYPE

When you die and the countdown appears, run your finger around the D-pad in a clockwise direction for 12 credits. When you next die, run your finger around the D-pad anticlockwise to get the sound test. Play all 95 sounds *(phew).*

Now return to the countdown and run the D-pad clockwise again and you will get 99 *(yes, count 'em)* cool credits. **(George Jacques, Rochdale, Lancs)**

BLACK BELT

After the Sega sign appears, the screen flashes blue for less than a second. Press the reset button and you will have infinite lives! If the beginning of level 1 is a bit mucked up, don't worry - this is part of the cheat. **(Giulio Tedeschi, Acton, London)**

SAFARI HUNT

When you shoot the panther or any other wild animal, keep shooting it to gain more points. (Use a rapid fire unit to make it easier.) **(Giulio Tedeschi)**

ROCKY

This tip is only for people with rapid fire! During the bonus stage before Drago, plug rapid fire unit into port 1 and you should keep both fingers on the buttons. You will now be able to beat Drago easily because of the power you built up. **(Giulio Tedeschi)**

RAMBO III

When you reach the end of level bad guy on level D, keep firing in the middle of the screen and throw your grenade at the mini helicopters. You should now complete the screen with ease. **(Giulio Tedeschi)**

SECRET COMMAND

From level 3 onwards you can continue the game (provided the 2-player option is selected). Just press left to right, left to right, and so on while pressing both fire buttons. **(Giulio Tedeschi)**

ZILLION I

Refer to the blank map in your instructions, or input the "map" command into a computer. Go to room D3 without obtaining any "opa-opa's". Go to the three cylinders on the top deck. Shoot the one furthest to the right. Opa-opa should appear at the top of it. Take this, and your life power will be at 720. Now go into the middle of the lift and it will show up on the screen. Now go half-out so that the lift is still visible. Go up in the lift and let the yellow barrier zap your life until it is at 120. Now quickly pull down on the joystick and you should go back down into the room you started off with, and your life power should be at zero, but you will not die. You are now invincible. **(Giulio Tedeschi)**

GHOST HOUSE

These tips are to explain the items like candles and fire places etc.

Candles: if you jump next to them, a flying knife will appear.

Fireplaces with lamps: if you pass them, an arrow will appear.

Light hanging from ceiling: if you jump and touch this the movement of everything will stop for a while and you can run freely, without being harmed, until the screen goes back to normal.

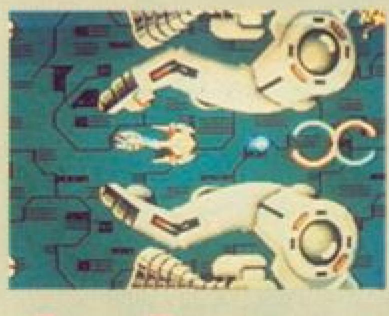
Flying arrows: if you jump on fifteen of these the screen will flaqsh yellow and you can gain extra points for arrows and knives.

Flying knives: jump on these and you can use them for a while.

(Giulio Tedeschi)

R-TYPE

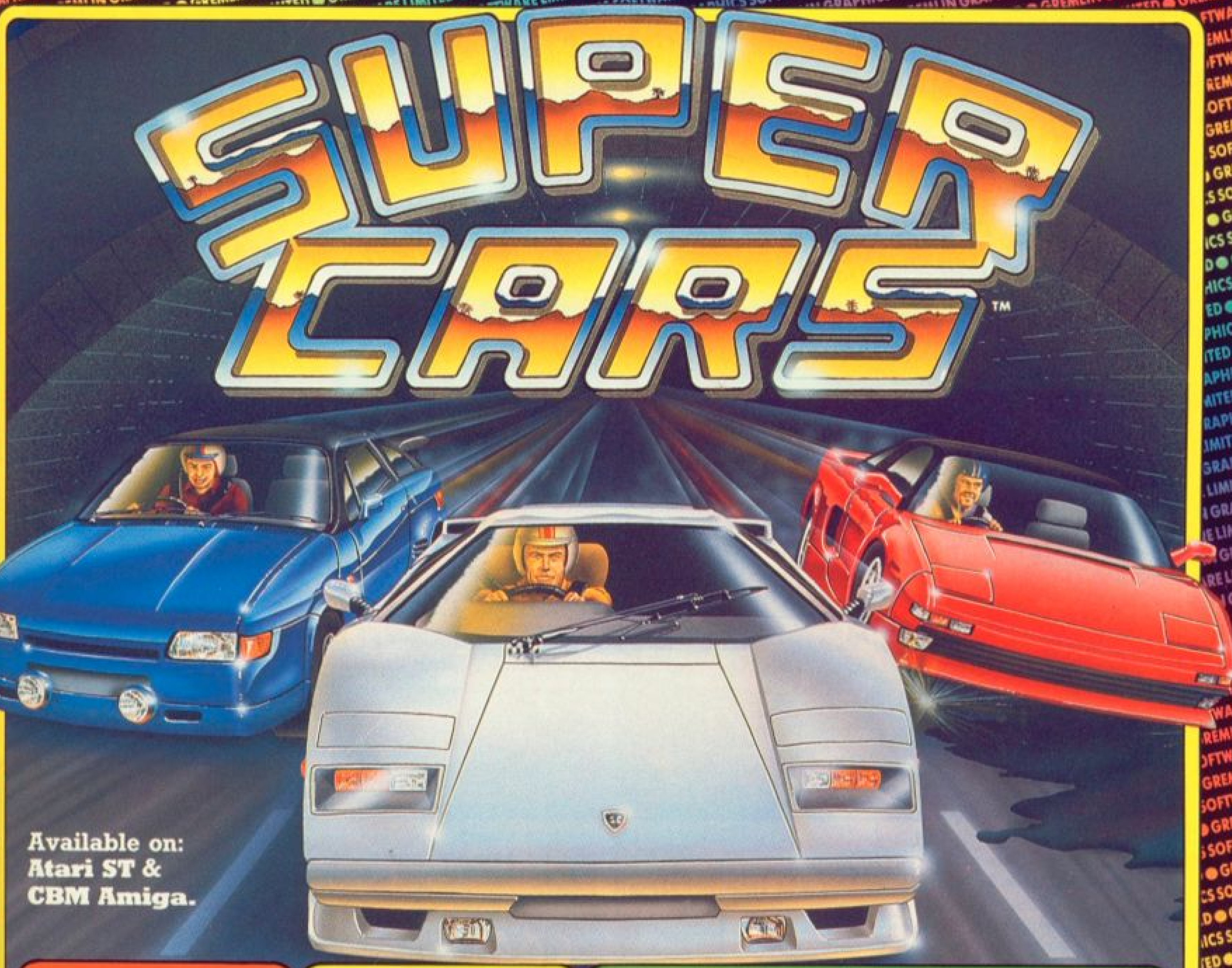
For invincibility: turn off the power. Plug in both joysticks. Hold joystick 1 diagonally down-right. Hold joystick 2 diagonally up-left, and hold button 12. Now turn on the power and hold down everyhting until the Sega logo appears and R-Type comes up. Now press button 2 on control 1. You are now invincible. **(Giulio Tedeschi)**



Whoops!

Regular readers of Console Corner may have noticed that some of the maps we printed last month for *Spy vs. Spy II* on the Sega were a little lacking in colour. This does make it slightly difficult to determine which stairway links with which. Let me assure you that the colour coding was there to begin with, but seems to have got lost somewhere in the reproduction process(!). Unfortunately we don't have room to reprint the offending diagrams, but don't worry, a bit of trial and error should soon identify the linkages.

NIGHTMARE RACING DREAM MACHINE



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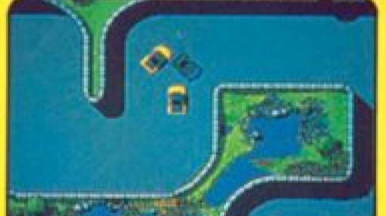
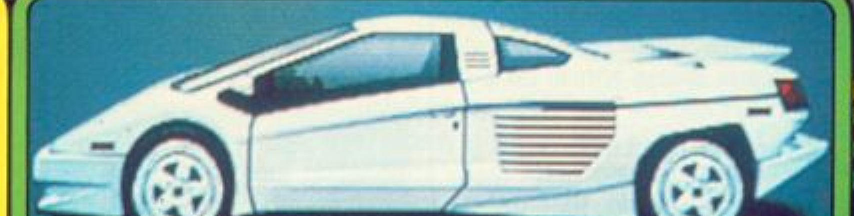
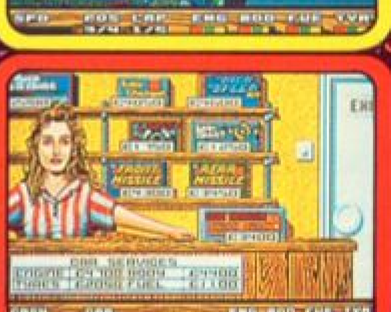
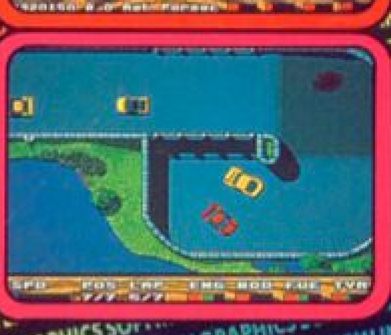
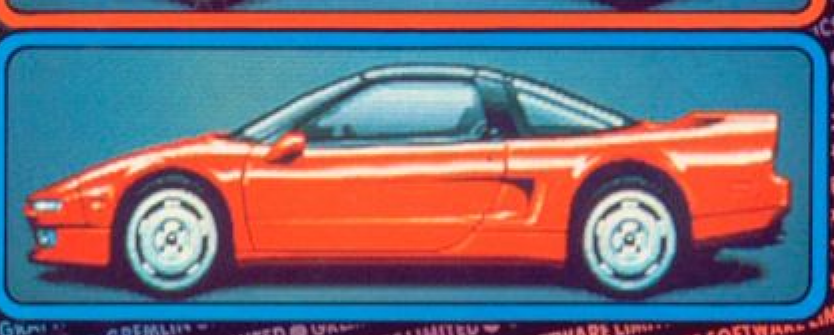
Screen shots from Amiga version.











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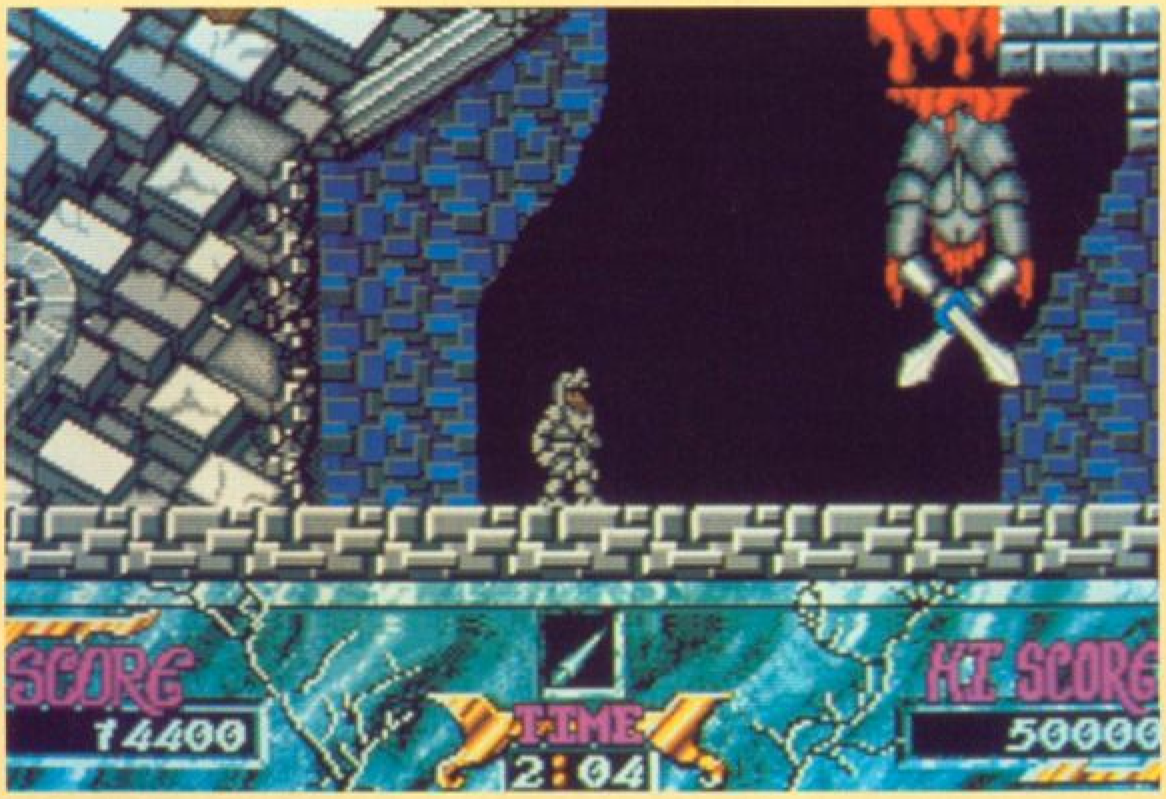
ALL THE LATEST

ACE TELLS YOU ABOUT THE NEWEST MAJOR CONVERSIONS

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

USG's Shoot'em up in Shining Armour



U S Gold £9.99cs , £12.99dk – ST version reviewed in Issue 28 – ACE Rating 905

Of the wealth of good games USG have licensed from the leading Japanese coin-op manufacturer – Capcom – *Ghouls 'N' Ghosts* is one of the very best.

The sequel to *Ghosts and Goblins* – *'Ghouls'* is a faery tale arcade adventure in which you play a knight in shining armour on a mission to rescue a princess who has been abducted by Satan.

The game begins just as its predecessor did in an eerie grave yard where pretty soon ghouls with out-stretched arms start rushing towards you and the living dead begin to well up out of their graves. The good knight is armed with a limitless supply of daggers which he can throw at the nasties.

The knight needs to be fleet of foot as the slightest brush up against a nasty will first cause him to lose his armour and a life every time there after.

Every level has a nasty at the end to stop you going on to the next – and pretty tough adversaries they make as well.

Ghouls is not for beginners. It is a tough challenge which requires speedy reactions, careful planning, and persistence – as it will take the average player ages to get anywhere.

But this is in no way a criticism. Its toughness is true to the arcade original and as the old saying goes – the tougher the game the sweeter the reward.

C64

All of the game play is here – and this C64 interpretation of G & G is every bit as tough as the 16-bit versions. Slightly let down by some of the animation. At certain points in the game the knight appears to be running on thin air. The sound effects also leave a bit to be desired – appearing to switch themselves on and off at will in the version ACE tested.

ACE RATING 730

AMSTRAD

The action takes place in a relatively narrow strip of screen and scrolls very jerkily. All of the play levels are here and the sound effect reach a high standard. A particularly good thud as the axe and lance find their targets.

ACE RATING 735

C64

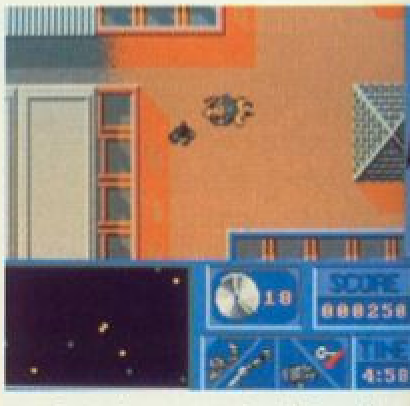
Moonwalker

US Gold, £9.99cs . £12.99dk – ST version reviewed in Issue 28 – ACE Rating 650

Moonwalker couldn't have a more absurd plot if it tried. It starts off with MJ legging it around a maze searching for the various bits of a bunny rabbit suit that he must don before jumping onto a motor bike and zooming off to the next level.

The aim of this multi-level arcade adventure is to rescue the girl who has been kidnapped by the drugs baron – Mr. Big. You can win by destroying Mr. Big's giant laser in the shoot 'em up on the last level. If you manage it MJ zooms off into outer space just as in the video.

This is all very well for the video where the plot is no more than a hook to hang the fabulous dance routines on. For the game though it all appears a touch contrived – even verging on the ridiculous.



Featuring an overhead view of the scrolling action the player must make careful use of the radar screen which represents Michael and the nasties that are pursuing him as tiny moving dots. To make things a shade easier the bits of the suit are shown as flashing dots.

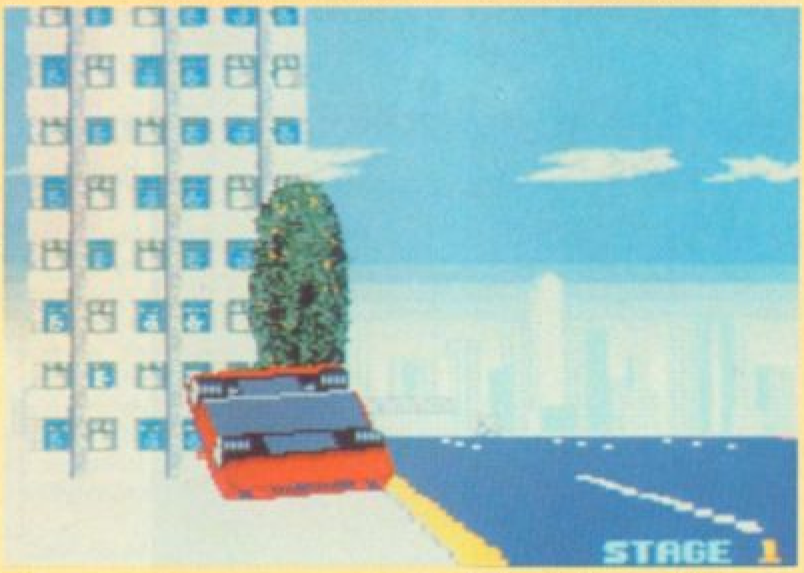
Getting dressed up in the rabbit suit is not as easy as it sounds. You have to put on all the pieces in the correct order. Its no good trying to put on the boots before the socks and so on.

Once you get to level two it is slightly disappointing to discover that it is almost exactly the same as the previous level. The same overhead view, the radar, only this time you are on the bike. Your aim here is to grab all of the emeralds

C64

Turbo Out Run

US Gold, C64/128, £9.99cs . £12.99dk - Amiga and ST versions reviewed in Issue 28 - ACE Rating 601



Way back before ST's and Amiga's ruled the world the best racing games that 'hard earned' could buy were played on the C64.

Pit Stop by Epyx stayed in pole position for about two years fighting off lesser challenges from *Buggy Boy*, *Out Run*, and *Super Hang On*.

Now as 1990 gathers speed the old Commodore puts its foot down again and switches up a gear with a bevvy of new race games.

The problem for *Turbo Out Run* is that as far as the C64 is concerned it follows on from a decidedly ropey *Out Run*. If you bought this and were less than impressed then don't dismiss this sequel out of hand. It is much more than a quick tweak of the old code with go faster stripes grafted onto the graphics. It is in fact a complete re-write from scratch, of which development house Probe are justifiably proud.

You take the wheel of a super fast Ferrari F40 in a race across America against a Porsche 959.

The battle of the super cars starts in New York city – heading west across America to California. The race is strictly illegal and the cop cars will attempt to bump you off the road – but who cares about that? For a macho whizz kid like you the only thing that matters is to prove to the blonde bimbo in your passenger seat that your Ferrari F40 can burn off a Porsche any day.

At the start you can chose between automatic and manual gears. Once the race is under way there are opportunities to increase the performance of your car by purchasing extra grip tyres, high speed engine, and special turbo.

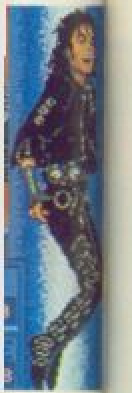
The race itself is split into sixteen levels – on four separate loads. The different levels take you through a great variety of landscapes including snow, deserts, and the particularly tricky forest level with logs lying across the road.

The speed and smoothness of *Turbo Out Run* on the C64 has to be seen to be believed. It is a major improvement on anything that has gone before. No jerkiness, none of the snail-like sprites that have characterised C64 racing games in the past. The conversion is the work of Steve Crow and Mark Kelly – two v. experienced programmers with classics like *Star Quake* from Bubble Bus and the excellent conversion of C64 *Mr. Heli* al;ready under their belts.

All of the frills from the coin-op are here – including the progress map, work shops, opening sequence in which the blonde abandons the Ferrari and joins your rival in his Porsche, turbo mode, and some superb sound samples. Probably the best C64 coin-op conversion of the year.

ACE RATED 926

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT



and destroy as many bags of drugs as you can. Once you do this you turn into the Stratos car and can zoom on to level three.

At last a genuinely new challenge. This horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up takes place in a night club where Michael has to shoot it out with Mr. Big's storm troopers.

This is the penultimate level before the final show down against Mr. Big's giant laser.

Four games – all reasonably entertaining, even if levels one and two are a bit samey. The opening levels have a feel of Pac-man about them with the fans chasing Michael around the maze. Its a shame there isn't the equivalent of the Pacman power pills – as it would have been nice to be able to have a go back at the crazed fans.

The business of gathering the bits of the suit and the emeralds has a certain appeal despite the fact that they are placed in the same place every time you play the game.

Two gripes – one, you have to re-load it every time you run out of lives, and, two, the music: it's awful – which is unforgivable for a game based around Michael Jackson.

All in all – a must for MJ fans, but an average little number for everyone else.

ACE RATING: 610

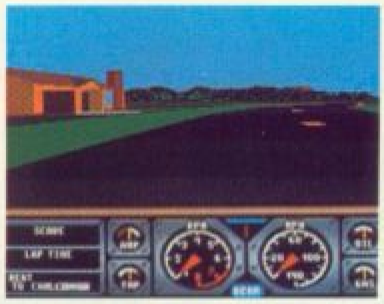
AMIGA

Hard Drivin'

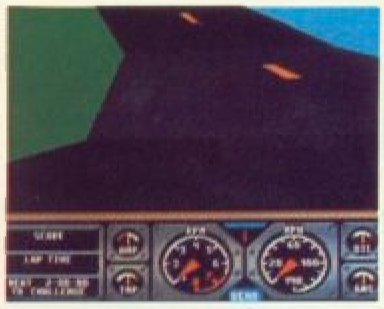
Domark/Tengen, £19.99 dk - ST Version ACE rated 937 and Spectrum Version ACE rated 921 in Issue 28

The first thing you notice when the Amiga version of *Hard Drivin'* boots is a screech of tyres and the sound of a throaty engine moving through its gears.

The music and sound FX are what sets this version apart from the others and places it in a league of its own.



For those of you who never get to an arcade Tengen's *Hard Drivin'* has been one of the coin-op sensations of the year. With more racing games than ever before vying for gamers coins *Hard Drivin'* managed to edge ahead of the rest by offering a very real driving experience. The game plays more like a simulation than an arcade game. Very responsive controls make the car act like the real thing. If the car swerves out of control you have to really wrestle with the controls to get it back on the right track.



A choice of two tracks – speed racing or the stunt track – can be selected by following the sign posts once you start driving. Although the speed track is good for practising your steering and mastering the gears the real fun is to be had on the stunt track.

Three stunts are on offer – Loop the Loop, Bridge Leap, and the Bank. You are racing against the clock so you need to keep your foot down as much as possible.

When you have mastered both courses you can take the ultimate challenge and race against the computer controlled Phantom Photon.

Overall the Amiga version is a most convincing conversion of *Hard Drivin'* – having the edge on the ST for smoothness and with the added appeal of to its sampled sounds.

One slight glitch in the graphics gives the effect of the other cars in the race appearing as if in miniature at certain points in the game. But this is a minor irritation and does not detract from the games playability.

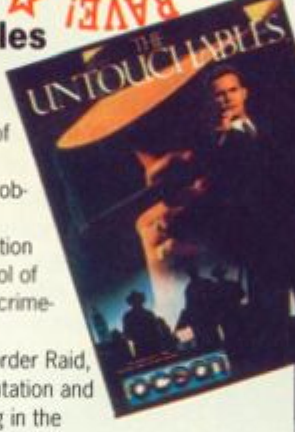
Jurgen Friedrich can feel proud of his away-day conversion job in Putney.

ACE RATING 938

1

AA RAVE! AA RAVE! AA RAVE! AA RAVE! AA RAVE! RAVE!

The Untouchables
from Ocean



Re-live the knife existence of Elliot Ness in his struggle against the retribution of mobster Capone.
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Alleyway shootouts, The Border Raid, The Railway Station confrontation and Warehouse bust culminating in the thrilling rooftop duel as you re-live the knife edge existence of Ness in his struggle against the retribution of Capone!

The Untouchables

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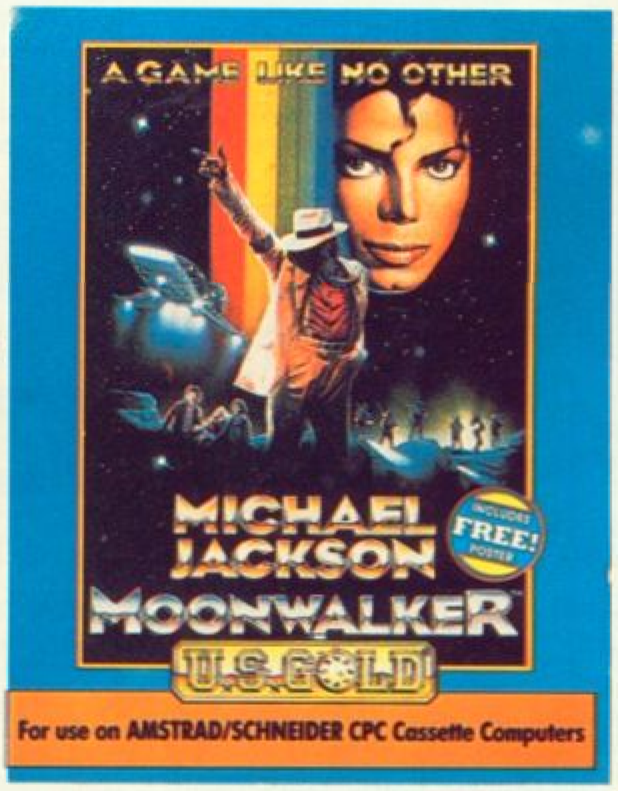
Michael Jackson Moonwalker
from U S Gold

After conquering the world of pop music, Micheal Jackson channelled his energy and talent into making his first film. Now U S Gold present the home computer version of that film, endorsed by the Superstar himself. Feel the rhythm in Club 30, transform into a futuristic silver robot and ultimately beat the drug peddling MR BIG in the unique world of MOONWALKER - a game like no other.

"You will be unable to tear yourself away from the screen even when it's way past midnight"
Mark Higham - ST Format



Moonwalker

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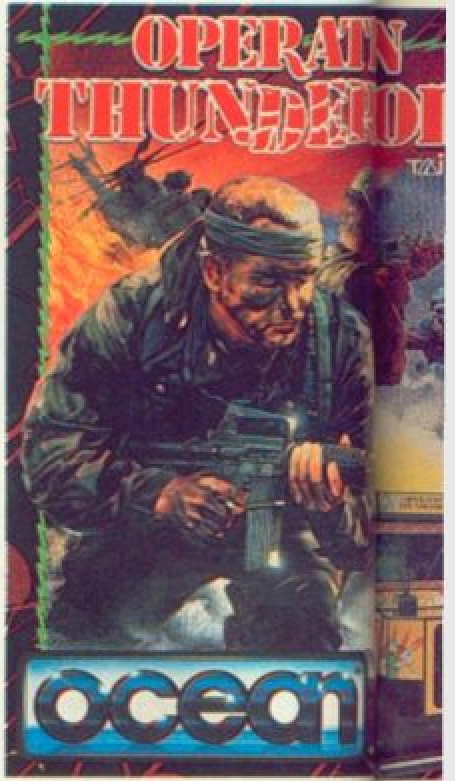
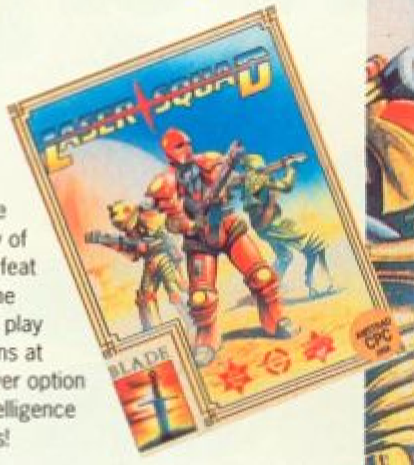


2

Laser Squad
from Bladesoft



Laser Squad combines strategic skill with the use of grenades and a variety of automatic weapons to defeat your foe. You can take the part of hunter or hunted - play with a friend and take turns at opposing roles. One player option plays against artificial intelligence so highly develped it bites!

"Laser Squad is a terrific game that is superbly playable and can definately be recommended as one for the library of any gameplayer." **Andy Smith, Amiga Format**

Lazer Squad

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4

Operation Thunderbolt
from Ocean

Follow up to last years No 1 hit "Operation Wolf". The game brings you enhanced shoot-em up action for one or two players. Thunderbolt not only reporduces the horizontally scrolling gameplay of Wolf, but adds 3D action to the scenario as you test your nerve against swooping jets, helicopters, tanks and many more awesome adversaries! Use the laser sight, or the bulletproof vest, but watch out for those air-to-ground missles.

"Brilliant is the only way to describe Thunderbolt" - not a game for the faint-hearted"
Trenton Webb -Amstrad Action

Operation Thunderbolt

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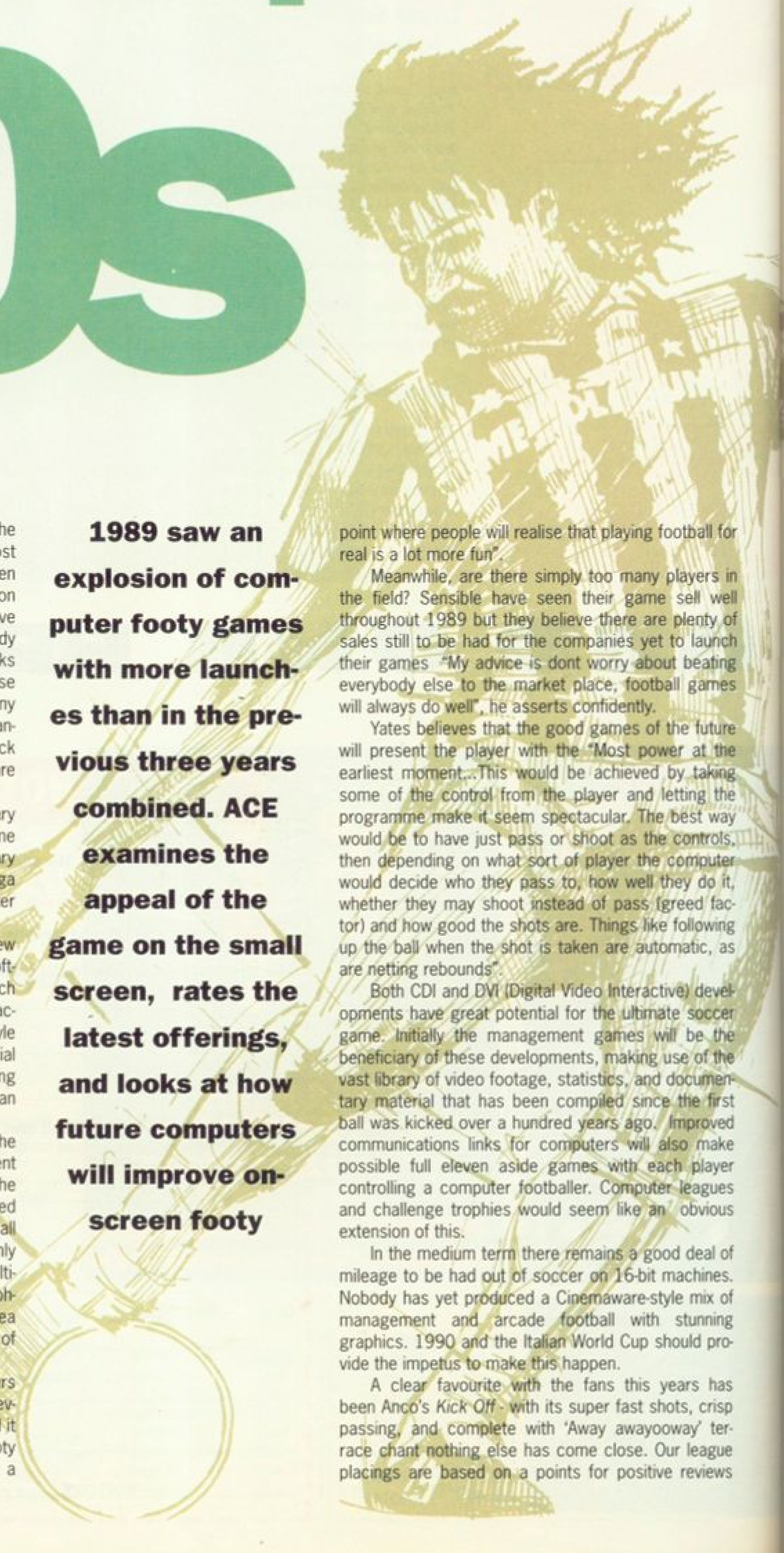
ACE 02/90

A Kick up the 90s

1989 saw an explosion of computer footy games with more launches than in the previous three years combined. ACE examines the appeal of the game on the small screen, rates the latest offerings, and looks at how future computers will improve on-screen footy



With Italy 1990 shaping up to be the best World Cup for decades most football-friendly softcos have been sharpening their footy skills on computer. Several games have been launched this year already and several more are in the works for 1990. The official World Cup game will of course be appearing, with at least one major company already negotiating with FIFA for the licence. Meanwhile, just about every man and his dog who can kick a ball has already been licensed and stacks more are sure to follow.

Computer soccer goes right back to the very beginnings of home computing. The earliest home computers had soccer games - albeit rudimentary ones, and the very latest machines such as the Sega Mega Drive offer all-singing and -dancing computer footy with gaspworthy sound and graphics.

It's questionable, however, to what extent the new 16-bit technology has really improved football software. There are two reasons for this: first, much footy fun revolves around strategic rather than reactive skills. Secondly, the essence of any arcade-style footy game is playability rather than awesome special effects. You can, therefore, get just as much passing pleasure from a clapped out Spectrum as you can from a spanking new Amiga 2000.

What will really count in the sports arena is the development of software skills. To a certain extent these are underpinned by new technology, but the real bonuses are going to come from continued experimentation 'on the field'. With so many football games currently being released, the art can only improve. And of course larger memories and – ultimately – CD-ROM should radically enhance the graphic side of things, which to date has been one area where many of the games could do with a spot of improvement.

Christ Yates at Sensible Software (the Developers of *Microprose Soccer*) is obviously a believer, however. He reckons that the games will become so good it will make people want to play footy for real. "Footy games will become more like simulations up to a point where people will realise that playing football for real is a lot more fun".

Meanwhile, are there simply too many players in the field? Sensible have seen their game sell well throughout 1989 but they believe there are plenty of sales still to be had for the companies yet to launch their games. "My advice is dont worry about beating everybody else to the market place, football games will always do well", he asserts confidently.

Yates believes that the good games of the future will present the player with the "Most power at the earliest moment...This would be achieved by taking some of the control from the player and letting the programme make it seem spectacular. The best way would be to have just pass or shoot as the controls, then depending on what sort of player the computer would decide who they pass to, how well they do it, whether they may shoot instead of pass (greed factor) and how good the shots are. Things like following up the ball when the shot is taken are automatic, as are netting rebounds".

Both CDI and DVI (Digital Video Interactive) developments have great potential for the ultimate soccer game. Initially the management games will be the beneficiary of these developments, making use of the vast library of video footage, statistics, and documentary material that has been compiled since the first ball was kicked over a hundred years ago. Improved communications links for computers will also make possible full eleven aside games with each player controlling a computer footballer. Computer leagues and challenge trophies would seem like an obvious extension of this.

In the medium term there remains a good deal of mileage to be had out of soccer on 16-bit machines. Nobody has yet produced a Cinemaware-style mix of management and arcade football with stunning graphics. 1990 and the Italian World Cup should provide the impetus to make this happen.

A clear favourite with the fans this years has been Anco's *Kick Off* - with its super fast shots, crisp passing, and complete with 'Away awayooway' terrace chant nothing else has come close. Our league placings are based on a points for positive reviews system of games launched in the last three seasons - tempered by the ACE review teams own opinions.

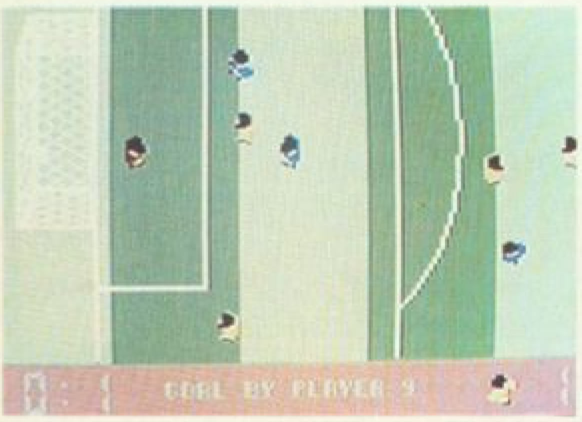
Watch out for future footy updates in the magazine: Gazza Gascoigne, Manchester United, and Liverpool are all about to come out as computer games. Next year's World Cup will have an officially licensed computer game and there seems little doubt that the popularity of computer soccer is set to continue.

ACE REVIEWERS 'STATE OF PLAY' VERDICT ON ARCADE COMPUTER FOOTBALL

Kick Off

ST £19.95dk • Amiga £19.95dk • PC Out Soon • Spectrum £9.95cs, £14.95dk • C64 £9.95cs, £14.95dk • CPC £9.95cs, £14.95dk

Anco's championship-winning performance with *Kick Off* is down to the programming brilliance of Dino Dini, an Italian programmer who changed the rules of computer footy games. His revolutionary approach offered wide expanses of green grass, tiny footballers, but a very fast moving game. The effect was of a pitch that appeared to be realistic in scale, rather than the handkerchief-sized pitches that characterised so many other games.



Kick Off also offers a totally new method of trapping and passing - which again introduced a new level of realism. Not as pretty as most other computer soccer games but far more playable - and in this type of game the playability is everything.

There's just one bug in the lettuce here. The 8-bit versions of *Kick Off*, recently released, simply don't cut the mustard.

ACE Rating 935

World Soccer

Sega Master £22.95

Sega's superb soccer cartridge for the Master System offers very sophisticated control over the ball. It performs well in the three vital departments of passing, shooting, and dribbling. There are also lots of extras such as a penalty shoot-out decider sequence and stacks of world team options to chose from. A very close runner up for the ACE Championship. It could have gone either way, John.

ACE Rating 920

Microprose Soccer

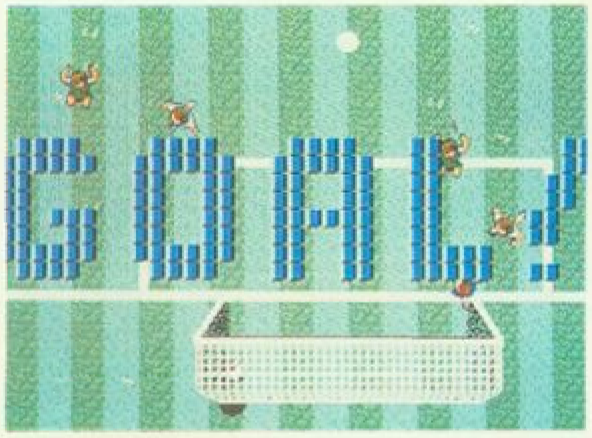
ST £24.95dk • Amiga £24.95dk • PC £24.95dk • Spectrum £9.95cs, £14.95dk • C64 £14.95cs, £19.95dk • CPC £9.95cs, £14.95dk

Concentrates on the fun and showmanship of soccer. This is the computer footy game that might be favoured by Rodney Marsh and George Best. All sorts of frills and spills have been added like Banana shots and action replays. Its league performance was slightly impaired by a lack of consistency in some of the versions (the Amiga version in particular didn't quite make the grade).

ACE Rating 909

SUPERLEAGUE SOCCER
IMPRESSIONS
AMIGA

MICROPROSE SOCCER
TACKLE WORLD CLASS SOCCER
MICROPROSE



Emlyn Hughes International Soccer

ST, Amiga Out Soon • Spectrum £9.95cs, £14.95dk • C64 £9.95cs, £12.95dk • CPC £9.95cs, £14.95dk

Performed well on 8-bit machines and might have challenged for top honours had the 16-bit versions been launched earlier in the season. Don't be put off by the fact that the game carries the name of that annoying twerp - Emlyn 'Crazy Horse' Hughes. It is an excellent game despite this. Provides for good quick attacks and enjoyable shots at goal. Manual control over the keeper is another nice touch.

ACE Rating 903

International Soccer

C64 £9.95cs, £14.95dk • C64 Commodore Cartridge £14.99

This was the first good computer footy game. Originally coded by Andrew Spencer (of *International Basketball* infamy) and produced on cartridge for the C64. CRL managed a bit of a Championship run with the game by bringing it out on cassette for the first time. If you own a C64 you really shouldn't be without it.

ACE Rating 900

Match Day II

Spectrum £7.95cs, £14.95dk • C64 £8.95cs, £12.95dk • CPC £8.95cs, £14.95dk

Jon Ritman's award winning Speccy footy game for Ocean restored some pride to the Sinclair terraces - for so long chided by Commodore fans for the lack of decent Spectrum football. The *Match Day* games changed all this. With stacks of game play options like changing the strip, altering the length of the game and many others. The game play was the horizontal perspective type - on the lines of Andrew Spencer's *International Soccer*.

ACE Rating 900

Match Day

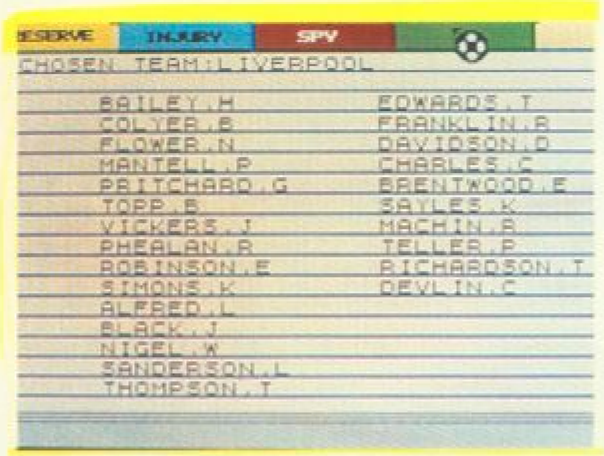
Spectrum £2.99cs • C64 £2.99cs • CPC £2.99cs

Similar to the above - but with less detailed graphics and fewer options.

ACE Rating 870

World Cup Soccer

Sega Megadrive Grey Import Approx. £30



```
CHOSEN TEAM:LIVERPOOL

      BAILEY.H              EDWARDS.T
      COLYER.B              FRANKLIN.R
      FLOWER.N              DAVIDSON.D
      MANTELL.P             CHARLES.C
      PRITCHARD.G           BRENTWOOD.E
      TOPP.B                SAYLES.K
      VICKERS.J             MACHIN.R
      PHEALAN.R             TELLER.P
      ROBINSON.E            RICHARDSON.T
      SIMONS.K              DEVLIN.C
      ALFRED.L
      BLACK.J
      NIGEL.W
      SANDERSON.L
      THOMPSON.T
```

Mega-Drive footy comes in with excellent graphics, a *Kick Off* style cameo showing the whole of the pitch, and several spectacular attacking options like heading the ball in the air and overhead kicks. Never really looked like topping the league because its playability failed to improve to the same degree as its sound and graphics. 16-bit consoles might be sweeping top honours in the arcade conversion league but they need to pull their socks up as far is footy is concerned.

ACE Rating 905

EUROPEAN 5-A-SIDE

ACE REVIEWERS 'STATE OF PLAY' VERDICT ON COMPUTER STRATEGY GAMES

European Five Aside

Spectrum £2.99cs • C64 £2.99cs • CPC £2.99cs

This budget kick around for 8-bit machines started the season strongly - topping the league in the early part of the year. Unfortunately it was knocked off the top when the big cheque books came out for a series of superior full price footy launches later in the year. Provided good end to end entertainment with an efficient dribbling and passing mechanism.

ACE Rating 860

INTERNATIONAL MANAGER
MASTERS OF STRATEGY
D&H GAMES

Tracksuit Manager

Spectrum £9.99cs • C64 £9.99cs • CPC £9.99cs • ST £19.99dk • Amiga £19.99dk • PC Out Soon

The ultimate management game with just about every possible situation that might confront a manager covered. Totally icon-driven and offering all sorts of features, including things like newspaper reports, match tactics, manager's diary, scouts, a choice of one thousand players from fifty five countries. Plays very slickly and with a good deal humour.

ACE Rating 929

Football Manager II

Spectrum £9.99cs, £14.99dk • C64 £9.99cs, £14.99dk • CPC £9.99cs, £14.99dk • ST £19.99dk • Amiga £19.99dk • PC £19.99dk

The sequel to the biggest selling footy management game ever. *FM II* offers a deluxe reworking of *Football Manager* - the original soccer management game, with laods more options and features. Enables you to make key management decisions such as buying and selling players, picking the team, deciding on play formations, commercial decisions and stacks more.

ACE Rating 920

SOCCER BOSS

Football Manager

Spectrum £2.99cs, £9.99dk • C64 £2.99cs, £4.99dk • CPC £2.99cs, £4.99dk • ST £5.99dk • Amiga £5.99dk • PC £5.99dk • BBC/Electron £2.99cs • Atari 8-bit £2.99cs • MSX £2.99cs • C16 £2.99cs • VIC-20 £2.99cs

The first, and some would say still the best football management game. It's the game that made its designer - 6-foot-plus giant Kevin Toms – a part of computer game history, as his bearded mug shot appeared on all of the hundreds of thousands of games that were sold. Quite a photo star was 'Our Kev'.

ACE Rating 909

Brian Clough's Football Fortunes

Spectrum £7.99cs, £9.99dk • C64 £7.99cs, £9.99dk • CPC £7.99cs, £9.99dk • ST £14.99dk • Amiga £14.99dk • PC £14.99dk • BBC/Electron £7.99cs, £14.99dk • MSX £7.99cs • PCW £14.99dk • +4 £7.99cs • Apple II £14.99dk

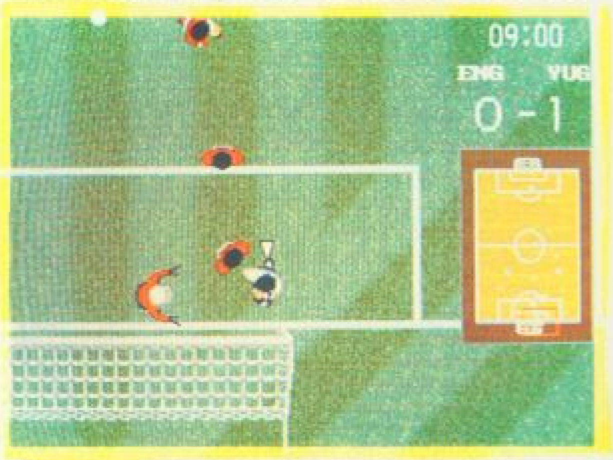
Now this was good. Cloughie's footy was a board game come computer game. Several management options enabled you to manage your team in league and international competitions.

ACE Rating 900

Superleague Soccer

ST £24.99dk • Amiga £24.99dk

This new footy title is the best attempt yet to combine strategy with arcade computer simulated soccer. You can manage a squad of up to thirty players with the program providing information on over four hundred soccer stars. FA Cup, Football League and international campaigns can be fought.



ACE Rating 850

Football Director

Spectrum £9.99cs • C64 £9.99cs • CPC £9.99cs

D&H have been making footy games for donkeys' years. Football Director is one of the their first and remains one of the best. Sophisticated game play makes it suitable for the serious soccer strategist. *Football Director II* is now also available with even more options, plus ST (£19.99dk) and Amiga (£19.99dk) and PC (£19.99dk) versions. Available for all computers.

ACE Rating 835

The Double

Spectrum £2.99cs • C64 £2.99cs

Start off in the Third Division (Nothing wrong with that, you'll be in excellent company with first rate sides like Bristol City) and work your way up to the First. Once there your aim is to pull off the double. Takes a bit of doing as only five teams have managed it in the history of the Football League. Pulling it off on computer is equally difficult.

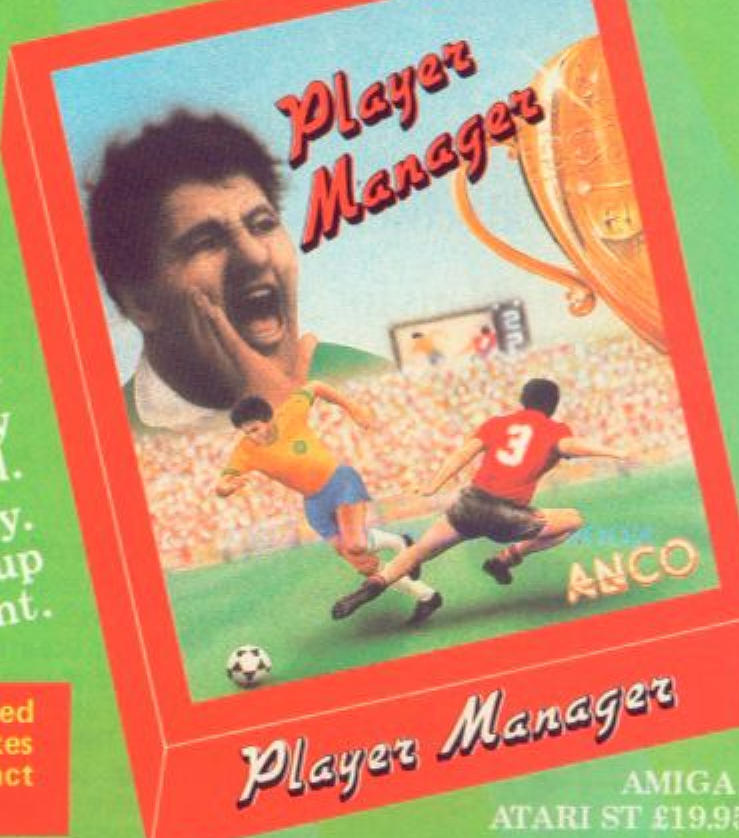
ACE Rating 81

Player Manager

BY DINO DINI

BRINGS THE QUALITY OF 'KICK OFF' TO THE ART OF MANAGEMENT

- Play the BEST soccer simulation. Blistering Pace - Pixel Perfect Passing.
- Unique facility to design your own TACTICS.
- Over 1000 individual players each with a unique combination of attributes.
- A lively transfer market. Haggle for the best deal.
- Focus camera on the ball or any player on the field.
- Load and Save game facility. League and Cup tournament.



Bring Back The Glory Days, the brief of the newly appointed PLAYER MANAGER, an International class player, as he takes charge of a third division club. His success depends on four distinct aspects of the game.

AMIGA - ATARI ST £19.95

CBM 64 - SPECTRUM - AMSTRAD - ATARI 800 £9.95(Cassette) £14.95 (Disc)

8 BIT VERSIONS OUT SOON

PLAYING SKILLS OF THE MANAGER

This part of the game is a refined version of the KICK OFF, retaining it's pace, flavour and the universally acclaimed game play. Play in your position or control the nearest player. The first option combined with a tailor made tactics can play havoc in the opposition goal mouth.

MANAGERIAL SKILLS

Devising winning tactics, acquiring players with right skills from the Transfer market and selecting a well balanced team is the test of his Managerial skills. When to hang his boots up is the toughest decision he has to make.

TACTICS

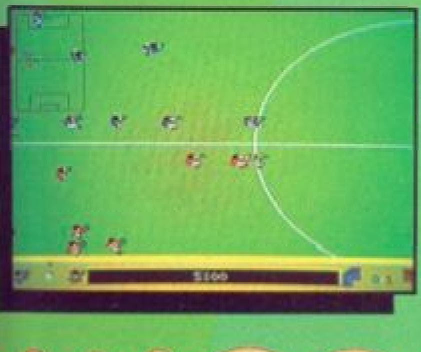
Four well proven tactics are provided to suit most situations but you can design your own tactics. See the tactics in action using the Ray Trace facility.

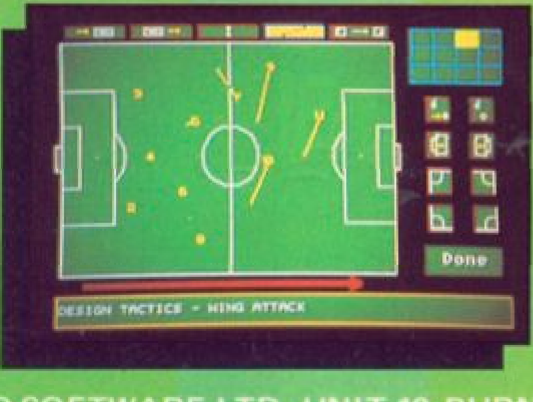
THE PLAYERS

Over a thousand players in the four division league. Each player with a unique combination of the following attributes: SHOOTING ACCURACY, PASSING ACCURACY, PACE, STAMINA, APPLICATION, AGGRESSION, HEIGHT and TACKLING SKILL.

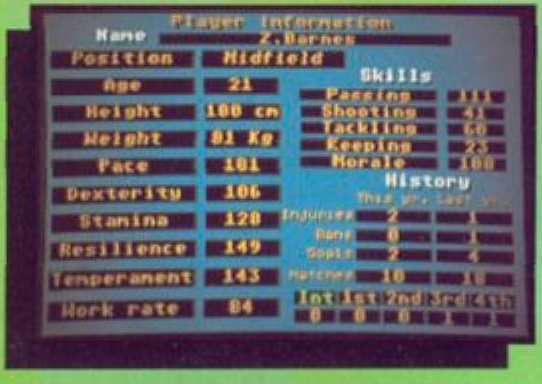
These attributes are influenced by the player's Age, Mental and Physical Dexterity, Quality of Experience, Weight, Temperament and Morale. There are several other factors such as injury, disciplinary points, unsuitable playing position which influence a player's performance.

Hosts of other factors like referees, injuries, disciplinary problems, team morale etc. can lay to waste the best laid plans of a manager. The PLAYER MANAGER brings everyday realities of a Manager's life, his talents as a manager and a player into a sharp FOCUS. THE FOCUS IS ON YOU.





DESIGN TACTICS - WING ATTACK



Player Information

Name Z.Barnes

Position	Midfield
Age	21
Height	180 cm
Weight	81 Kg
Pace	181
Dexterity	106
Stamina	120
Resilience	149
Temperament	143
Work rate	84

Skills

Passing	111
Shooting	41
Tackling	60
Keeping	23
Morale	100

History

	This yr.	Last yr.
Injuries	2	1
Bans	0	1
Goals	2	4
Matches	10	16

Int	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
0	0	0		

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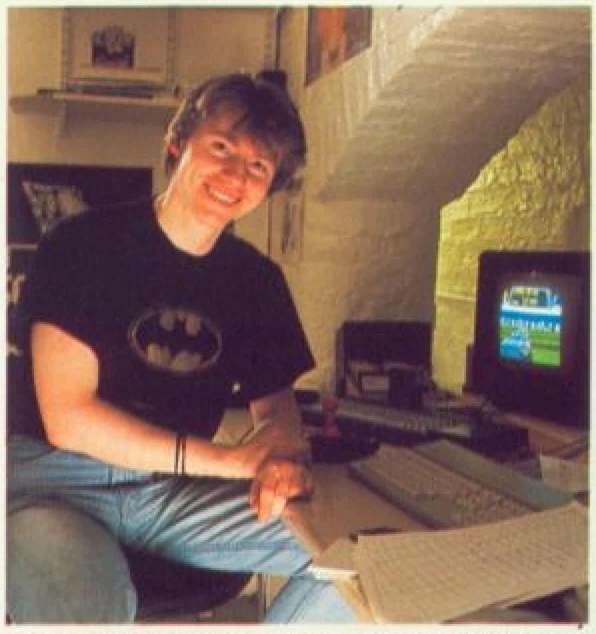
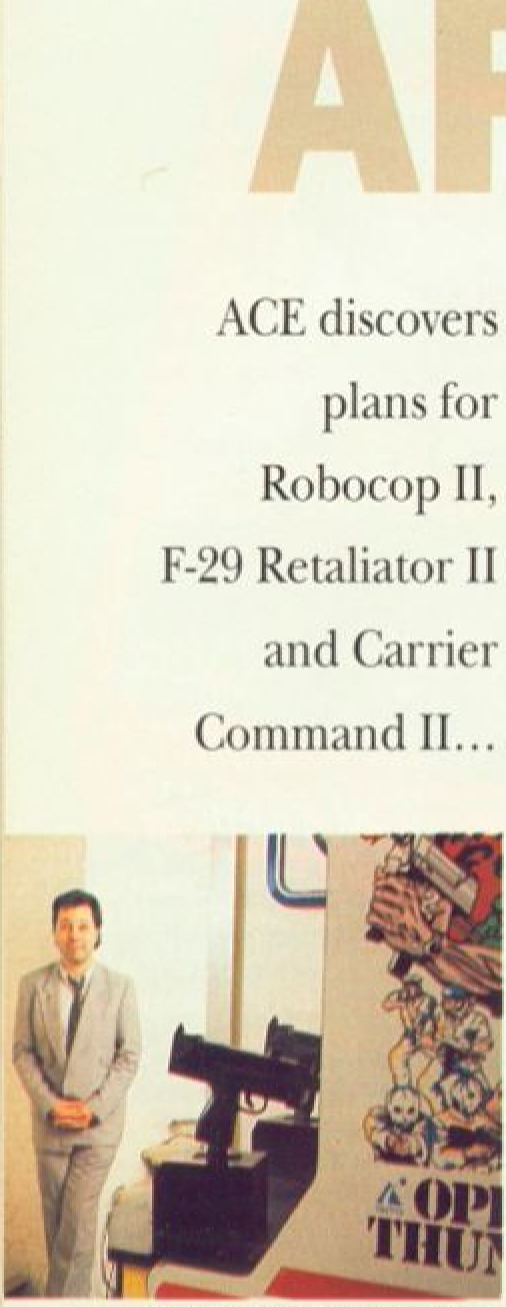
AN OCEAN APART

ACE discovers plans for Robocop II, F-29 Retaliator II and Carrier Command II…

With *Robocop* breaking all chart record's and *Batman - The Movie*, *Chase HQ* and *Untouchables* looking set to do the same, Ocean has a claim to be the UK's top software house. ACE went on the road to Manchester – via the picturesque A6 (Matlock, Ambergate, et all) – to find out how Ocean does it.



Jobbie: from playing in a Dublin band to being an Ocean proggie



Gary Bracey: "software manager, dogsbody and escapegoat"

A DROP IN THE OCEAN

Perhaps the secret of Ocean's success lies in its industrious Software Manager, Gary Bracey. 31 year-old Bracey, joined Ocean four years ago and oversees the development of every Ocean title – deciding on who works on what and how much they get paid. The hardest part of his job is the high pressure involved in meeting deadlines while maintaining quality, "we feel Ocean's quality is OK now, but the timings and deadlines are always a problem". The most difficult game Ocean has ever produced was *Batman – The Movie* on the Amiga, which was written in an amazing 7 weeks! Admittedly, there was a team of 8 people working solidly on the project. "Luckily we were able to allocate various sections to different programmers – allowing them to work simultaneously," sighed Bracey.

> ***"I don't like computer journalists."***
>
> ***John Brandwood, 1989***

Bracey is backed up by a very strong team of 30 highly-skilled in-house games developers, and even has people working over in France. Ocean funded a French development team after some French guys wrote ST *Guerrilla Wars* for them. This French connection then produced *Operation Wolf*, *Dragon Ninja*, *Cabal*, *Beach Volley* and is currently working on *Ivanhoe* and a soccer game. Bracey quipped, "we've had some very nice coding from them, and it gives me the chance to pop over to Paris every once in a while".

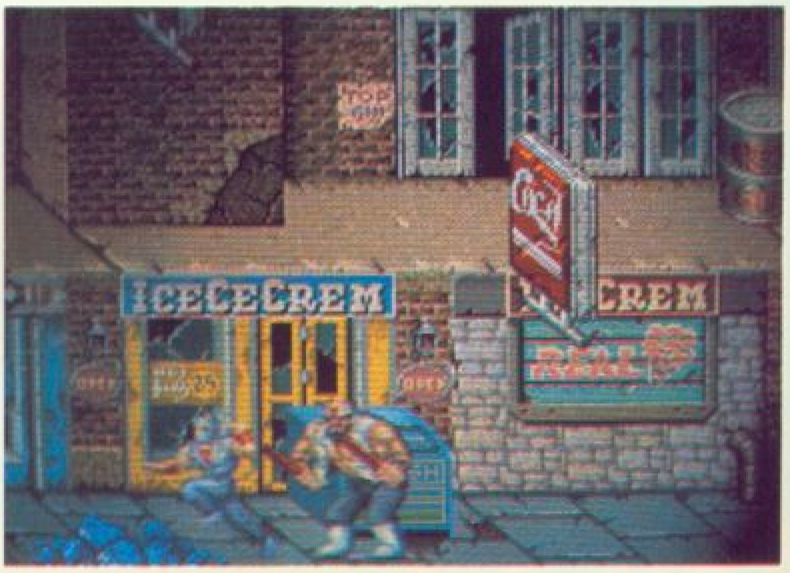
> ***"Computer entertainment will continue to thrive for a very long time."***
>
> ***Gary Bracey, 1989***

SMALL FISH IN A BIG OCEAN

While ACE visited Ocean, we were introduced to some of the programmers behind *Operation Thunderbolt* and *Chase HQ* (see reviews on pages 48 and 42) as they were putting the finishing touches to their masterpieces.

John Brandwood was an extremely tired and irritable programmer, hooked up to a Mega ST and Sony CD Walkman, writing the ST and Amiga versions of Taito's blood 'n' guts coin-op shoot'em-up, *Operation Thunderbolt*. Brandwood told us that Ocean is a test-site for the *Devpac Developer* assembler from Hisoft, "it's very much tailored for the games developer, and for cross-debugging it's extremely easy to use". Brandwood's most arduous task – apart from getting the coin-op's 3D sequences right – was transferring the 20+ PC disks crammed full of sprites from the original coin-op. "We got the original sprites from Taito, transferred them over, recoloured them and pieced them together (they were originally 64x64 blocks)." Mimicking the coin-op's hardware sprite shrink capability was also difficult, but Brandwood has managed 17-20 levels of shrinkage per sprite, with a maximum size of 64x32 and 132 frames of animation. *Operation Thunderbolt* took him 5 months to write, but he see's it as "nothing original, just a good blast'em-up". When asked, Brandwood refused to comment on the music he was listening to, and after our eagle-eyed ACE reporter spotted a Jethro Tull CD we could understand why!

Dublin-born John O'Brien was just as exhausted but in a far better frame of mind than Branwood. 22 year-old Jobbie – as he's known around the Ocean programming dungeon – wrote the Spectrum and CPC versions of *Chase HQ*. He's particularly proud of



***Shadow Warrior*: due out from ► Ocean at Easter**

the speed he's managed to squeeze out of the Spectrum's Z80. Before joining Ocean, Jobbie worked for Gremlin where he produced the Spectrum, CPC and MSX versions of *Northstar* and *Dark Fusion* on the Spectrum and CPC. For Ocean he has written *Wec Le Mans* on the CPC and the 16-bit versions of *Batman - The Movie*. Typically, for a programmer, Jobbie feels the best feature of *Chase HQ* isn't playable and addictive gameplay but the moving logo's on the title screen coupled with 6 channel sound.

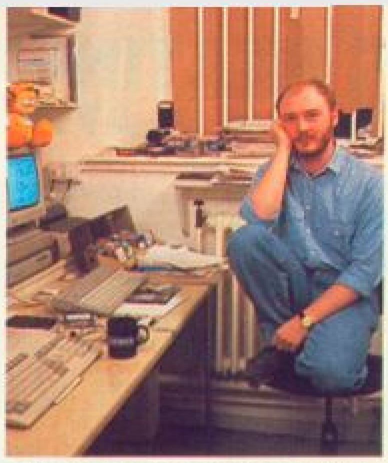
LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

On the subject of future games releases, Bracey confirmed Ocean's increased commitment to original software, "we're going to be far more selective than in previous years – more of the *Batman*, *Robocop* and *Chase HQ*... less of the *Short Circuit*. Our range has shrunk in terms of titles, but we've increased the number of formats".

Over the next six months Ocean will be bringing out: *Night Breed* – a tie-in film licence, the movie actually stars Bracey as an "extra"; *Robocop II* – "the movie is out in Autumn, the game at Christmas, and the film script's better than the original *Robocop*!"; *Battle Command* – the follow up to the classic *Carrier Command* programmed by Realtime Games (see ACE 27 for further details); *Shadow Warrior* – a sophisticated martial arts coin-op from Technos due for release at Easter; *Secret Agent* – Data East coin-op featuring James Bond-type action sequences; plus "some big movie titles which we are currently in the process of negotiating".

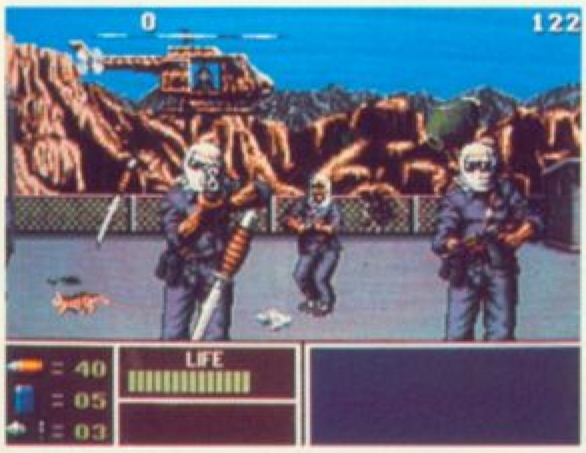
Bracey added, "we're going heavily into original 16-bit software, heralded by *F-29 Retaliator*, plus other strong product like *Lost Patrol* and *Ivanhoe*. *F-29* will be out on PC in the first quarter of 1990 – we're currently mulling over a games design for the follow-up to *F-29* which will be programmed by the same team and should be very special".

Although Bracey is a big games fan he keeps his feet firmly on the ground when producing them, "I'm usually sick to the back teeth of most titles by the time they're released".



John Brandwood has written *Gryzor, Renegade, Rambo III* and *Operation Thunderbolt*

> *"People just want to shove a game in and play."*
>
> *John O'Brien, 1989*



Operation Thunderbolt **blasts onto the Amiga**

GARY BRACEY

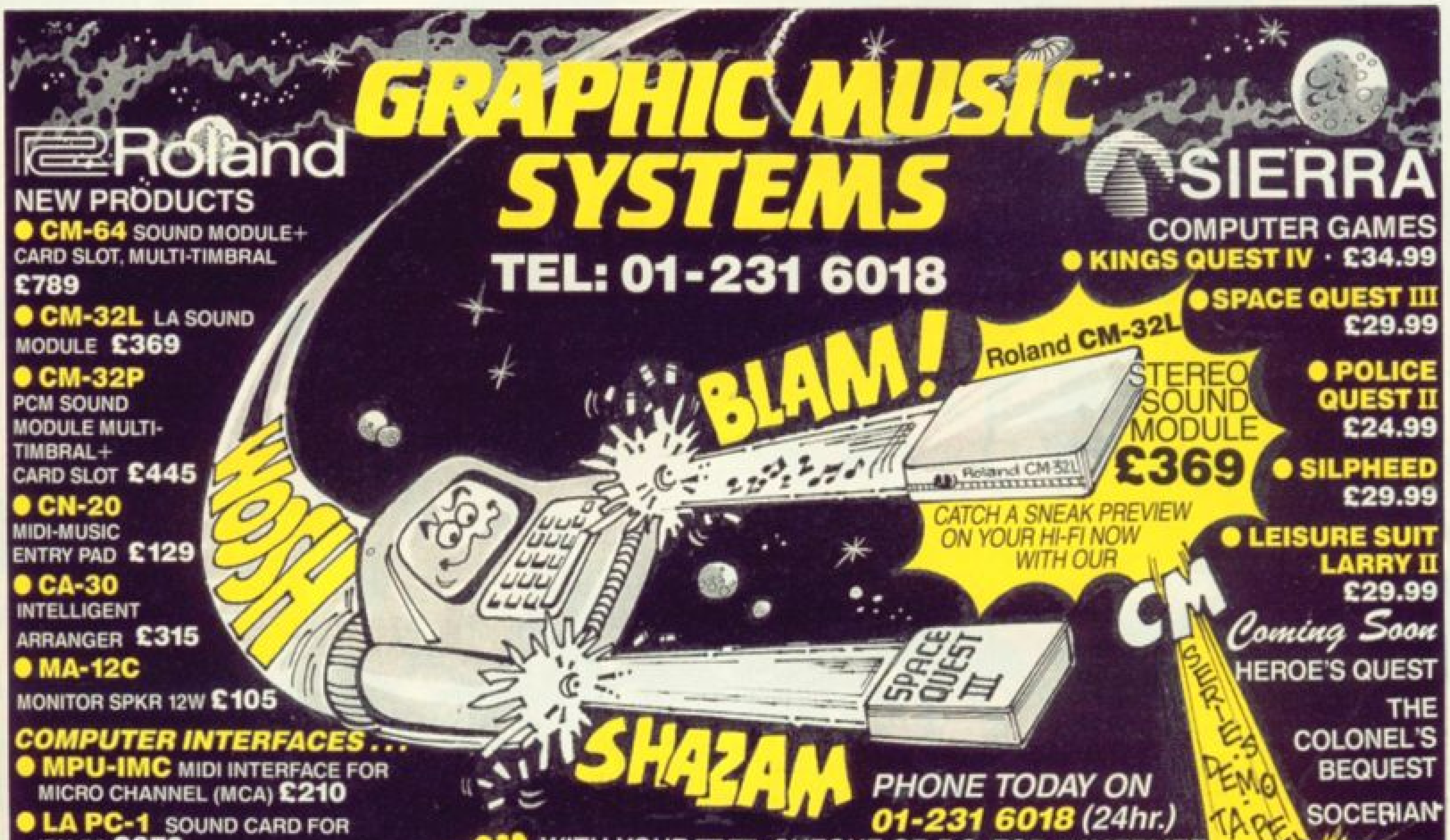
TOP PAST-TIMES
1 Skiing
2 Games
3 Reading
4 Watching videos
5 Making videos

TOP MOVIES
1 It's a Wonderful Life
2 Blade Runner
3 Robocop
4 The Big Chill
5 Star Wars

JOBBIE

TOP MICROS
1 PC Engine
2 Amiga
3 ST
4 Spectrum
5 C64

TOP GAMES
1 Dungeon Explorer
2 Super Wonderboy
3 New Zealand Story



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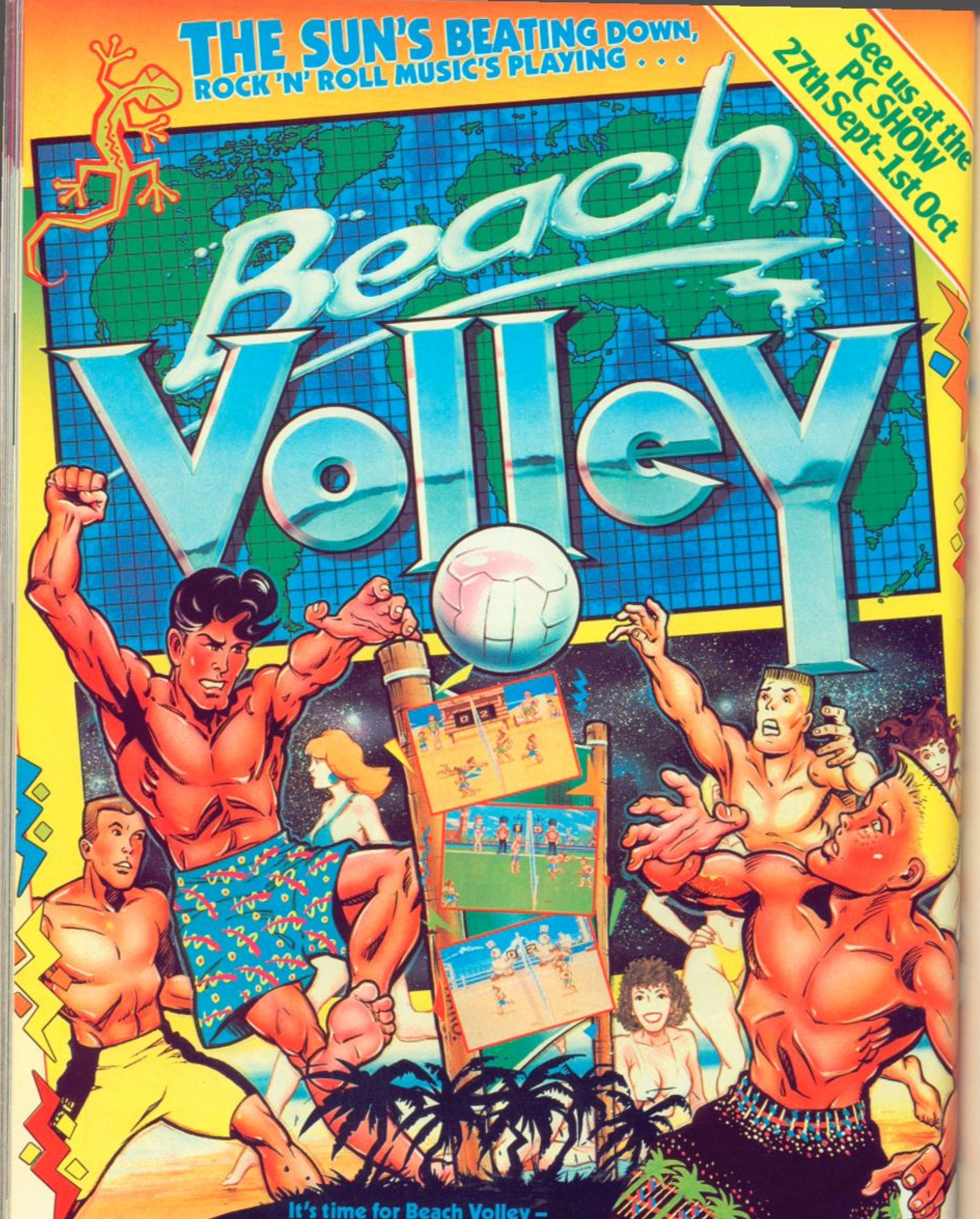
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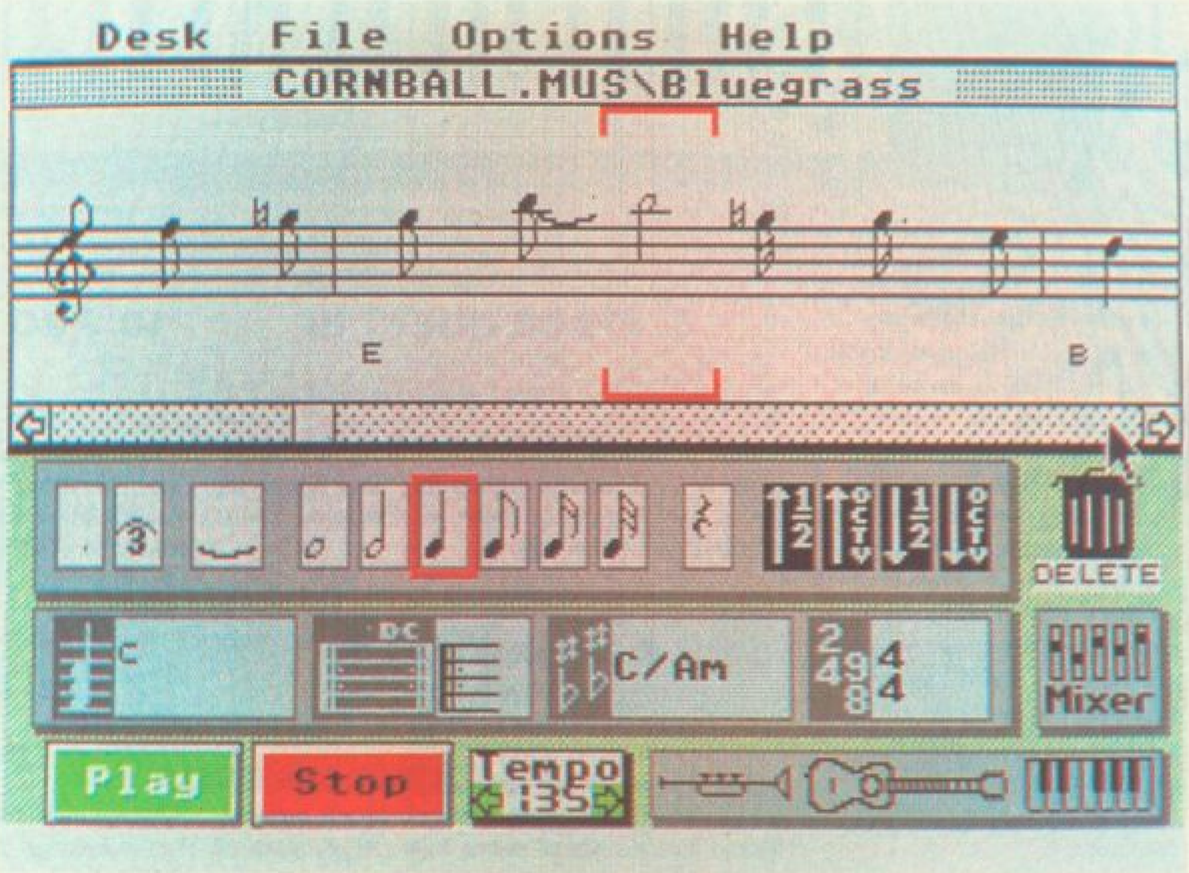
MIDI MADNESS!

Check out this month's ACE Music Gift guide, and discover how for the price of a few knick-knacks you can forget Kylie Christmas carols and get into some more radical rapping



MIDI was first dreamt up by a company called Sequential Circuits. Before the implementation of the standard, most music machines were stand-alone beasts and keyboard rarely spoke unto keyboard, unless it was in the cumbersome language of control voltages. Nowadays MIDI allows you to link your accordion (we kid you not) to your guitar to your keyboard, and control 16 instruments simultaneously.

The festive season has a habit of leaving the budding muso rather cold. No, he's not outside in the snow, he just wishes all his relatives would go home so he can sneak back to the bedroom studio for a spot of 'Deep House'. So, keep your resident sonic-sicko happy by jogging down your local technoporn shop and buying presents from the yuletide ACE Music Catalogue selection, with all the hottest sounds around for your computer. Admittedly the cheaper stuff is for the Amiga, but that's only due to the fact that the Amy has so much sttuff already built into it. But there's plenty here for users of all machines...

1. DELUXE MUSIC CONSTRUCTION SET

Electronic Arts

PC, Macintosh and Amiga £49.95

A musical notation based music package using built in sampled sounds or any MIDI devices. Ideal for those of you who know all about sticks and blobs, and we don't mean you like to beat fat people. As music programs go this is the optimum balance of price vs. performance.

2. CASIO MT-540

Casio Electronics

£149

Not a bad sounding little keyboard, even if the keys are a bit small. Plays well, has 8 built-in effects (reverb and echo etc.), 210 voices, 42 drum sounds and MIDI ports too, so plugs into any MIDI interface and sequencer.

3. ROLAND LAPC-1

Roland

PC board £379

The ultimate music system for your PC. Basically the same LA synthesis engine which sits inside the MT-32, but on a card for your computer. You can use it as a MIDI device, or for the rich of pocket you can just use it to listen to the brilliant scores in the Sierra Games.

4. CHEETAH MD16 DRUM-BOX

Cheetah Marketing

£299

16 bit digital drum machine with everything you ever needed in a drummer. It's never late for rehersals, it keeps time and it doesn't break wind in the back of cramped transit vans.

CASIO
Casiotone CT-460

Although MIDI boasts 16 channels, and the ability to control 16 units simultaneously, the system is in fact a serial one. This means signals are sent one by one along the wire. The 'simultaneous' bit only arises because the data is sent so fast that each instrument appears to respond simultaneously. In fact, if you chain several MIDI instruments together, you'll notice a slight delay. You can get round this by purchasing a MIDI patch bay, which accepts one input and redirects it to several units simultaneously.

5. SPACE QUEST III

Sierra-On-Line
Atari ST, PC, Apple II and Amiga,£34.99

Brilliant graphic adventure, which along with *Kings Quest IV*, *Silpheed* and *Leisure Suit Larry 3* drive the Roland MT-32 synth to create unbelieveable soundscapes to go with the games.

6.SOUND OASIS

New Wave Software
Amiga £139.95

Reads Ensoniq Mirage keyboard disks directly from Amiga drives, and convert sounds to IFF samples. Mirage libraries are all selling their sample disks off cheap, which gives you access to an enormous library of pro samples!

7.SOUND QUEST VOICE EDITORS

Sound Quest
Atari ST, PC and Amiga £95.00

Editor/librarians for D50, D10, D110, MT-32, TX81Z, TX802, K1, M1 and CZ synthesisers. Edit sounds on your synth from your computer on-screen and save them onto disk rather than expensive RAM cards.

8.ADEPT SOUND PROCESSOR

Adept Development
Amiga £99.95

Real-time digital effects using special software and modified sampling hardware. Sweeten your demos with reverb, chorus, echo, flanging and even (albeit delayed) pitch-shifting.

9. YAMAHA PSS-580

Yamaha Corp.
£149.99

Another nifty keyboard, this time from Yamaha. Small keys, yes, but 100 big sounds from an FM tone generator, 100 PCM rhythms and special effects like portamento ('slide' to you and us), reverb, sustain and vibrato. MIDI ports too, so it fits right into your MIDI interface.

10. PRO SOUND DESIGNER

Eidersoft
Amiga £69.99

A full featured hardware/software 8 bit sampler package. Everything you need to produce and edit your own IFF Amiga samples. Comes complete with gender bender for A500s and B2000s, as their paralell ports are different.

11. ROLAND MT-32

Roland
£360 secondhand £230

32 voice multitimbral synthesiser, a real band-in-a-box. The forerunner of the current music system, like the CM64 etc., but more editable. Usable with the Sierra-On-Line games as well as a number of other computer games which drive MIDI.

12. MUSIC X

MicroIllusions
Amiga £229.00

MIDI 250 track sequencer with built-in voice editors for popular synths and support for SMPTE and MIDI time code. It would cost £700 for a comparable sequencer, SMPTE/MIDI timecode and editor setup! Shop around for special offers.

13. FM MELODY MAKER EXPANDER

Hybrid Arts
Atari ST £69.95

Very flash cartridge which brings the sounds of the Yamaha FM synths to users of less sonic computers. Complete with a real Yamaha FM chip and software for editing the sounds yourself. You can access the sounds from MIDI, using an external keyboard, and it'll run on any ST, even a Stacey, and at any resolution, colour or black and white.

14. MUSIC STUDIO 2.0

Activision
Amiga £23.95

Music notation based editor with MIDI. Features some interesting sampled sounds, and far cheaper than the EA offering. Version 2.0 offers many advanced features, and compatibility with other systems.

If you want to get the MIDI Gritty, check out the first few issues of ACE which carried a fool-proof guide to the standard. We're actually considering issuing this and other ACE music articles as a series of special ACE Reprints. If you'd be interested in getting hold of one, drop us a postcard and we'll let you know as soon as they're available. They make the subject of MIDI perfectly comprehensible and were described on one national bulleting board as '...the clearest introduction to MIDI I've seen...'. The address to write to is Steve Cooke, ACE MIDI, 30-32 Farringdon Lange, London EC1R 3AU

15. CASIO CT-460

Casio Electronics
£229

Normal sized keys, 465 sounds, 8 effects, 42 percussion sounds plus MIDI too! A real gigging little synth for the price of a Mac disk drive.

16. DATEL MIDI INTERFACE

Datel Electronics
Amiga £34.99

Okay, so you bought an Amiga instead of an ST. Swell thinking bub, but you missed out on a MIDI interface. Darn. How about this though? A British built MIDI interface which works with all Amiga MIDI packages.

17. YAMAHA R100

Yamaha Corp.
£178

Excellent value reverb unit from Yamaha with 60 preprogrammed effects. Comes complete with 16 bit quality and MIDI ports from remote program changes... "Yeah, I want the reverb and echo to cut in when I hit the last chord of Star Spangled Banner, man." It's a cinch.

18. AUDIOMASTER II

Aegis
Amiga £69.95

A sample editor to sample from any Amiga sampler, (apart from the Pro Sound that is), and edit it. And using it you can convert any file format to any other Amiga sound file format; IFF, Sonix, Raw, etc.

YAMAHA
R100
60
POWER
INPUT
PROGRAM
MEMORY
RECALL
MIDI
BYPASS

CONTACTS

Activision (UK) Ltd
Blake House
Manor Farm Road
Reading
Berks, RG2 0JN
Tel: (0734) 311666

Casio Electronics
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1000 North Circular Road
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Tel: 01-450-9131

Datel Electronics
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Govan Road
Fenton
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Electronic Arts
Langley Business Centre
11-49 Station Road
Langley
Berks, SL3 8YN
Tel: (0753) 49442

HB Marketing
Brooklyn House
22 The Green
West Drayton
Middx, UB7 7PQ
Tel: (0895) 444433

Hybrid Arts (UK) Ltd
24/26 Avenue Mews
Muswell Hill
London, N10 3NP
Tel: 01-883-1335

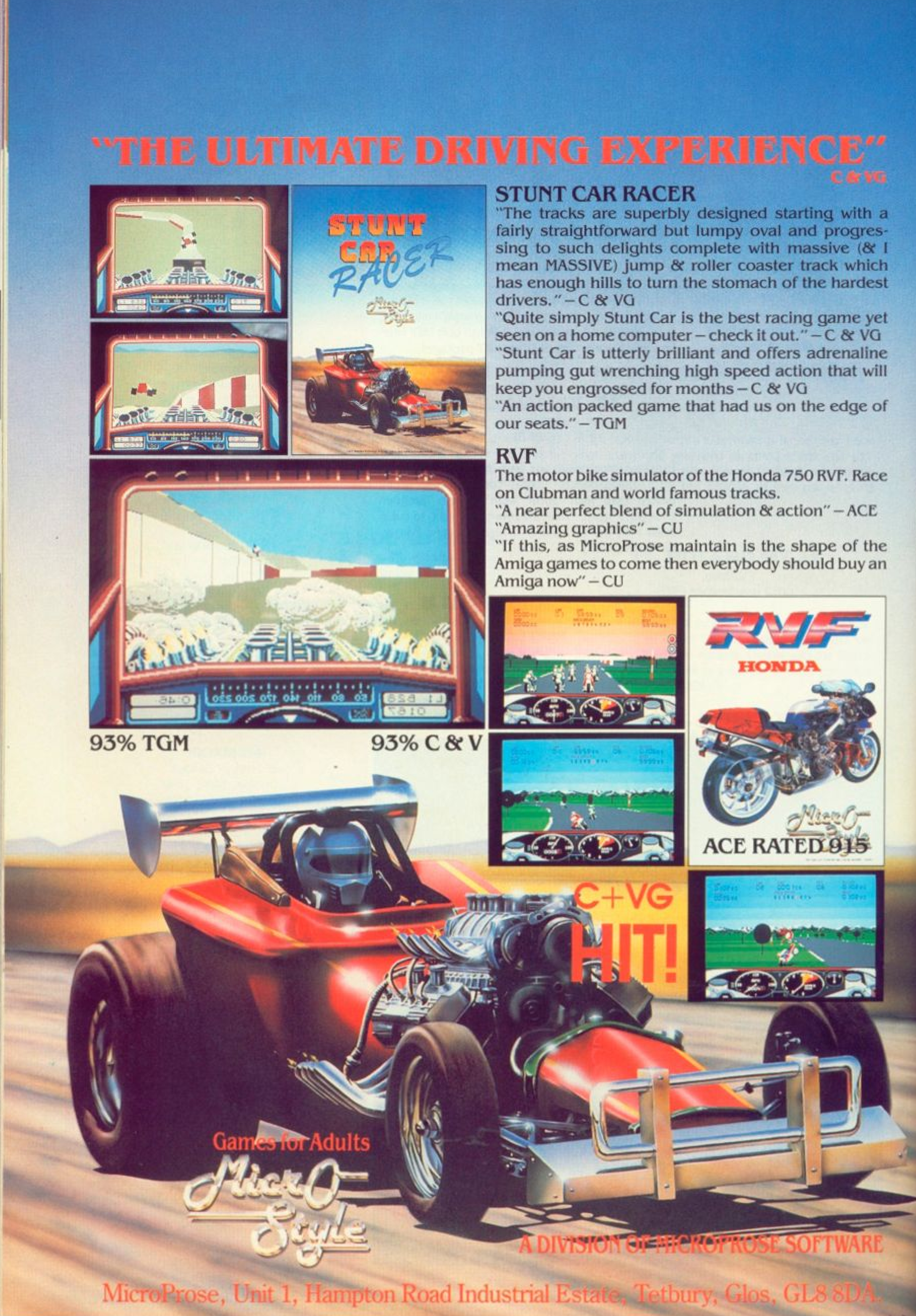
MCMXCIX
9 Hatton Street
London, NW8 9PR
Tel: 01-258-3454

MicroIllusions
Unit 4
Cromwell Business Centre
New Road
St Ives
Huntingdon
Cambs, PE17 4BG
Tel: (0480) 496497

Roland (UK) Ltd
Amalgamated Drive
West Cross Centre
Brentford
Middlesex, TW8 9EZ
Tel: 01-568-1247

Yamaha Kemble Music (UK) Ltd
Mount Avenue
Bletchley
Milton Keynes, MK1 1JE
Tel: (0908) 371771

Yuletide MIDI Madness was compiled by **Phil South.**



"THE ULTIMATE DRIVING EXPERIENCE"

C & VG

STUNT CAR RACER

"The tracks are superbly designed starting with a fairly straightforward but lumpy oval and progressing to such delights complete with massive (& I mean MASSIVE) jump & roller coaster track which has enough hills to turn the stomach of the hardest drivers." – C & VG

"Quite simply Stunt Car is the best racing game yet seen on a home computer – check it out." – C & VG

"Stunt Car is utterly brilliant and offers adrenaline pumping gut wrenching high speed action that will keep you engrossed for months – C & VG

"An action packed game that had us on the edge of our seats." – TGM

RVF

The motor bike simulator of the Honda 750 RVF. Race on Clubman and world famous tracks.

"A near perfect blend of simulation & action" – ACE

"Amazing graphics" – CU

"If this, as MicroProse maintain is the shape of the Amiga games to come then everybody should buy an Amiga now" – CU

93% TGM

93% C & V

ACE RATED 915

C+VG HIT!

Games for Adults

Micro Style

A DIVISION OF MICROPROSE SOFTWARE

MicroProse, Unit 1, Hampton Road Industrial Estate, Tetbury, Glos, GL8 8DA.

ACE FLASHBACK!

If last month's opening instalment of a decade in computing all seemed rather remote - strange hardware such as the Apple II, primitive games, and a lot of excitement over a doorstop-shaped machine with 1K RAM - then you'll be pleased to hear that from 1984, things will become much more familiar...

In 1984, the games computing industry underwent huge upheaval. Many software and hardware companies went to the wall; most of those which remained have survived to the present day in one way or another. Both Amstrad and the new-look Atari under Jack Tramiel made their first appearance. The licensing deal became suddenly popular, and has never yet gone out of fashion. American games became affordable for the first time, thanks to US Gold, which helped to raise the standard of Commodore 64 software no end, and broadened games players horizons.

Micros like the C64 and Amstrad's CPCs were intended primarily as games machines (despite the utilities and cut-down business software which appeared on each), rather than the tenaciously 'boffinish' image of Sinclair machines. 1984 saw the decline of home computers as the preserve of the amateur programmer and electronics enthusiast, and reinforced the micro as part of the entertainment furniture, along with the video and CD player.

1984

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Enter the QL....

In January, the national press and the TV cameras packed into the formal launch of the Sinclair QL, the machine which led to the decline of Sinclair Research. The real problem with the QL was that Sinclair saw it as 'the first business machine for under £400' – and that Sinclair Research spent most of 1984 desperately trying to to finish building it; the Sinclair-buying public wanted it to be a games machine; and the business community found it impossible to take the non-standard, Microdrive-driven QL seriously.

Beef up the Speccy!

The Spectrum, however, was still selling strongly, and Sinclair injected new life into it by upgrading the machine, with a new case and QL-style keyboard, to the Spectrum+ in October. The company also announced that it was working on a portable computer, code-named Pandora, a machine which eventually came out as the distantly-related Z88.

CPC-success

The most significant computer launch of the year was, without a doubt, Amstrad's entry into the market. Amstrad Consumer Electronics, known for its TVs and music centres, unveiled the CPC464 in April 1984. The contrast between the CPC launch and that of the QL, three months earlier, was marked. Large numbers of complete CPC464s were on display, and – unusually for 1984 – they appeared in the shops exactly when Amstrad said they would be. Twenty-odd software titles were ready, with 30 or so more in development. Its parts were nearly all standard, familiar components. The fact that the tape recorder and monitor were all built in was hailed as a tremendous asset (though any other manufacturer could have done it); the price (£229 for a mono monitor, £329 for a colour monitor) represented excellent value for money.

Cheap at £2500

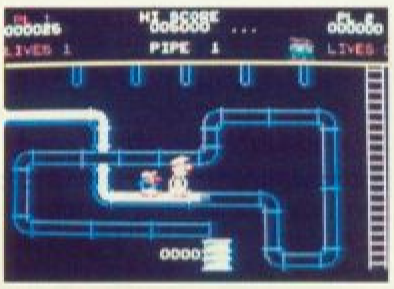
Apple launched the Macintosh computer on January 24, 1984, billed as the first truly user-friendly computer for the individual. If you think Macs are expensive now, consider that the original 128K Mac cost £2,500 in the UK, and that this was considerably cheaper than the Apple Lisa. Lisa was the first machine to use the now very familiar WIMP interface, devised by Apple from original graphic user interfaces developed by Xerox's research centre in Palo Alto at the turn of the decade. However desirable the Macintosh, it has never become a prime home computer in this country, thanks to its pricing. But its user interface, the mouse and icons, the ease of operation, the inclusion of the larger and more practical 3.5" disk drive greatly influenced Atari and Commodore when planning the ST (often dubbed the 'Jackintosh' at launch) and Amiga.

MSX Mess

This year also saw the first MSX machines appear. All year, new manufacturer's names were added to the list that would comprise the Japanese 'invasion' – 12

The 114...264...364...Ultimax – Commodore went through agonies of indecision as to how to repeat the success of the C64. In the end we got the C16 and Plus/4 in April. The C16 had some success as a starter computer, but the Plus/4 was nowhere near as attractive as the 64 for games playing, and its in-built business software (*3 Plus 1*) was obviously inadequate for serious use. The C16 was supported with budget titles for some time, but in the end both machines were first discounted and finally discontinued.

David Crane: Activision's master programmer, who brought you *Little Computer People* and *Ghostbusters*.



Super Pipeline* from Taskset was the company's greatest hit. They also produced the first environmental game: *Seaside Special*, by the programmer who was later to give us *Rainbow Warrior.

Flamboyant high fliers Imagine ran into difficulties in March when partwork publisher Marshall Cavendish rejected games commissioned to support its Input magazine. In June, Imagine flogged its entire back catalogue to new company Beau Jolly; it became apparent that they weren't wallowing in cash as much as people had been led to believe. Imagine went into receivership in July, in a flurry of winding up orders, off-the-shelf companies, resignations, unfinished Megagames and fast cars. It owed money to Marshall Cavendish, Liverpool City Council and its wine merchant, among others.

Lucasfilm's *Koronis Rift*. Later the company moved over to animated adventures.

Who said this? ...and about whom

'The most prodigious inventor since Leonardo da Vinci'.(Answer at the end)

or so machines which would all follow a common standard, based on the Z80 processor. Despite their success in their home market, MSX struggled in the UK. The concept of the MSX 'standard' was not well understood, they lacked software, they were sold through hi-fi outlets where browsers weren't particularly interested in computers, and they were priced ridiculously high – the 64K Sony, Sanyo and Mitsubishi models, for example, were £300. By Christmas, the prices were beginning to fall to nearer £200, and the reductions continued into the next year. The manufacturers unsurprisingly declined to launch MSX 2 and MSX 2+ to an ungrateful British public.

Mark Strachan signs the first cheque for Domark on 9th May 1984

FAST Talking

FAST, the Federation Against Software Theft, was set up in July. Its initial aim was to lobby Parliament to have the Copyright Act (1956) amended to include computer software as a specifically protected item, a goal which it achieved in 1985. Continuing support from the software houses, and the dedication of the current chairman, Bob Hay, has led to its expansion to encompass active investigation of software piracy.

ACTIVISION

Founded: 1979; in UK: 1983

Initially a video game manufacturer, Activision turned its attention to Atari, Commodore and Apple II computers in 1984. The UK division was established in September 1983, and like its US parent company, began selling computer titles in 1984. The company has a strong reputation in the field of licensing games, but has also produced some of software's quirkier games such as *Alter Ego* and *Little Computer People.* In February 1986, Activision bought out adventure specialist Infocom, which continued as a separate label within the group.

First computer titles: *Pitfall* and *Zenji* (Atari 400/800)

Best ever seller: *Ghostbusters* (all formats), released Christmas 1984. *Ghostbusters* is the world's biggest selling computer game, with over 2 million units sold altogether to date.

OCEAN

Founded: June 1983

Collaboration with US Gold in 1984 pushed Ocean Software into software's first division. The company was founded by David Ward, who had previously headed up mail order outfit Spectrum Games (whose name had singularly failed to delight Sinclair Research), and wine bar proprietor Jon Woods. Together with Superior Software, it became the first publisher to acquire a legitimate coin-op conversion licence – for *Hunchback* – from Century Electronics. In 1985, it bought the rights to use the Imagine name as a label. In recent years, Ocean has become one of the most consistently successful publishers, with a string of sought-after licences converted into high quality computer games, culminating this year in blockbusters such as *Batman – the Movie, The Untouchables*, and *Chase HQ*.

First title: *Armageddon* (Spectrum)

Best ever seller: *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*

MASTERTRONIC

Founded: 1984

Mastertronic invented budget software. Before Mastertronic, Spectrum software cost anything from £5 to £10, Commodore titles around £8 to £10, Atari XL games £10 upwards. Furthermore, Mastertronic distributed its cheap games into unconventional places: motorway service stations, newsagents, garage forecourts, and supermarkets. In July 1984, Mastertronic joined forces with Galactic Software – the Darling brothers – and the first of the long running 'Simulator' series came out. The Darlings broke away to form Code Masters in 1986. In 1987, Mastertronic bought Australian publisher Melbourne House, and in 1988 became part of the Virgin group.

First title: 12 debut titles, including *Vegas Jackpot, Space Walk* and *Bionic Granny*, for Vic 20, C16 and C64.

Best ever seller: *Formula One Simulator* (all 8-bits)

US GOLD

Founded: January 1984

Geoff and Anne Brown set up Centresoft in 1982 to distribute computer games. Among the titles they handled were Atari 400/800 and Commodore 64 imports from the US, which were generally superior to home-grown titles, but proved difficult to sell at £30-£40. The Browns tried to persuade the US companies to let them duplicate, package and sell their titles in the UK, under the separate brand name US Gold. They were not all that successful until *Beach Head*, from a then tiny company called Access, sold in vast quantities, and convinced the American publishers that they were missing out. As the US Gold catalogue grew, the Browns asked Ocean to deal with conversions to British machines, and Ocean chiefs David Ward and Jon Woods became directors of US Gold. *Beach Head* was the first title to be converted on to the Spectrum, and remains one of US Gold's best sellers

Birth of the Amiga

When Jack Tramiel, high profile managing director of Commodore International, left the firm abruptly on January 13 (a Friday), it surprised even his own employees. None of them would have predicted that before the year was out, he would be heading Atari, the company Commodore had virtually buried. Tramiel had built Commodore up from a typewriter repair company in the 1950s to an international corporation which had survived the Calculator 'wars' of the 1970s, and gone on to lead the world in low cost colour computing with the Vic 20 and the Commodore 64. It is generally accepted that Tramiel left in a dispute with chairman Irving Gould over bringing his three sons into managerial positions within the company.

Tramiel only laid low for a few months before his name began to be linked with Warner Communications and its ailing Atari division. In July, an extraordinary deal was signed in which Warners, in effect, lent Tramiel the money to buy Atari. Relations with Commodore at this point were hardly amicable. As senior Commodore executives left to join Tramiel at the new Atari, lawsuits were also exchanged.

The legal action concerned an unfinished micro called the Lorraine, being developed by a company called Amiga and headed by Jay Miner, designer of the Atari 800's graphic chips. Commodore was trying to buy the company outright; Atari claimed Amiga had not repaid its advance to Atari for a chip design contract.

The legal arguments continued for well over a year, but did not prevent Commodore from acquiring Amiga, and continuing to fund development of the Lorraine micro, which Commodore

Geoff and Anne Brown – founders of Centresoft.

to this day. US Gold introduced British gamers to Epyx's sports simulations and to *Leaderboard*, to Microprose's flight simulations, to SSI's role-playing games, and more recently to coin-op conversions from Capcom and Sega. It was also the first company to make £9.99 the standard price for tape-based titles, and £14.99 on disk.

First title: *Beach Head*, Commodore 64

Best ever seller: *OutRun* (all formats), with over 500,000 sales.

EVENTS

● British Telecom announced in November that it was going to hold an inquiry into Prestel's security procedures following the discovery that mystery 'hackers' had broken into mailboxes, including that of the Duke of Edinburgh.

GAMES OF THE YEAR

Elite (BBC) – first of the space combat and trading games and arguably still the best. British Telecom bought the conversion rights in November.

Jet Set Willy *(Spectrum)* – long-awaited follow-up to *Manic Miner*, *JSW* was really simple platforms and ladders, but its scored highly for its playability and programmer Matthew Smith's sense of humour.

Lords of Midnight – strategy wargame style game with vast number of locations, startlingly original at the time.

Knight Lore – probably Ultimate's finest hour. With *Knight Lore*, it revolutionised Spectrum programming by creating highly detailed solid graphics, but each screen in a single colour against black – thus avoiding the Spectrum's notorious attribute clash.

SAYINGS OF THE YEAR

QL predictions

'We had an idea of what price the machine was going to be sold for – which set the parameters for the hardware. We couldn't knock out something 'noddy'. On the other hand, we didn't have time to produce a QL from scratch.'

Chris Hall, Locomotive Software, on the design of the CPC464

'We want MSX to become a world standard in computers – like VHS in video'

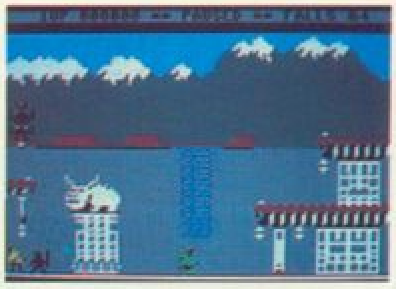
Chris Greet, Toshiba UK product manager

1985

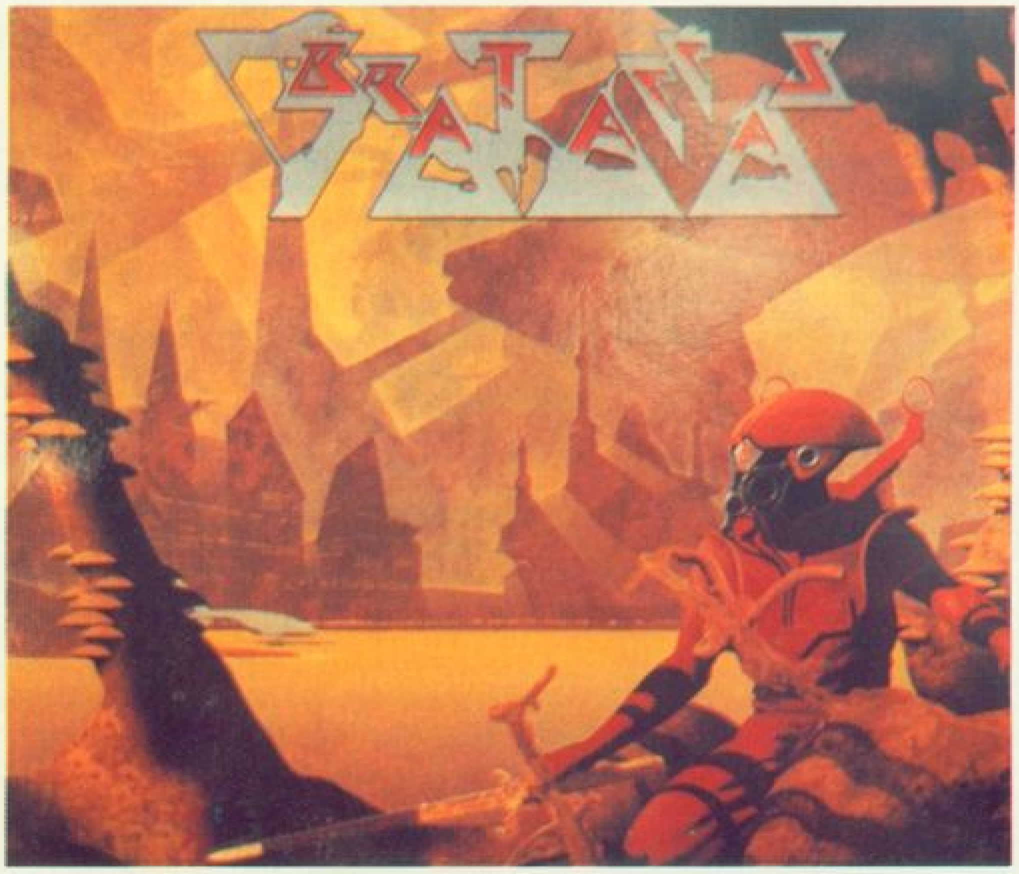
ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

In 1985, memory chips were cheap and manufacturers took advantage of this by upgrading their old machines. The Commodore 64 became the Commodore 128, the Amstrad CPC464 became the CPC664 – and four months later 664 buyers all had collective apoplexy when the CPC6128 appeared in the shops. Atari proudly unveiled its new ST technology at CES in January. The original ST series comprised two models: the 128K 130ST and 512K 520ST and the disk drive was separately housed, rather than built into the keyboard. The STs were initially pitched as Macintosh perform-alikes at a third of the price – the 130ST was to be priced at $399 and the 520ST at $599.

Commodore's Amiga was also launched this year, at a high-pizazz function in New York in July, and in the UK at the PCW show in September where it was shown to a select few behind closed doors. Like the ST, the Amiga's exact configurations remained fairly fluid until it eventually became available in 1986. Commodore, however, spent much of 1985 trying to force attention on to the C128 – with only partial success.



The original Bruce Lee game from Datasoft – a far cry from the recent Software Toolworks release.



***Brataccas* from Psygnosis – the first British title to succeed in the US before coming to Britain.**

'I look forward to working with Sir Clive – a man of brilliant inventive genius.'
Robert Maxwell, Daily Mirror, June 17, 1985

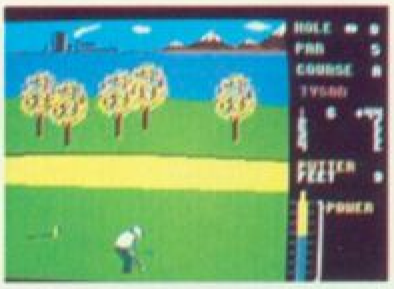
While Atari and Commodore were redefining the leisure computer, Amstrad took an entirely different route with the PCW8256, creating a completely new market for cheap word processing. Farewell to Oric, which finally gave up the fight and went into receivership.

NEWCOMERS

PSYGNOSIS

Founded: 1985

Psygnosis was set up out of the ashes of Imagine Software, with high ideals. Its stated intention was to develop software for the emerging 16-bit market, and



***Leaderboard:* a great Access original, still going strong in later incarnations.**

while the Atari ST and Amiga were being talked about, they weren't yet available. So first titles were produced for the QL and Apple Macintosh. The success of the ST/Amiga market has meant that Psygnosis hasn't had to compromise its initial philosophy, although Ian Hetherington says that in retrospect they were premature to start with 68000 programming straightaway, and with hindsight, wouldn't do it that way again.

First title: Brataccas, Apple Macintosh
Best ever seller: Barbarian (all formats)

Hewson's *Paradroid:* battle is joined in this classic strategic shoot-em-up.

EVENTS

- The generosity that characterised Band Aid and Live Aid did not leave the software industry unmoved. *Soft Aid* was conceived at the beginning of the year and the compilation tape appeared in March. Companies such as Elite, Activision, Taskset, Virgin and US Gold released their games on the tape free of charge. *Soft Aid* went on to become the best-selling title of the year and raised over £350,000 for the Band Aid trust.

- In April, police arrested computer journalists Steve Gold and Robert Schifreen on forgery and counterfeiting charges relating to the Prestel hacking incident the previous year (see 1984).

Who said this – about what?

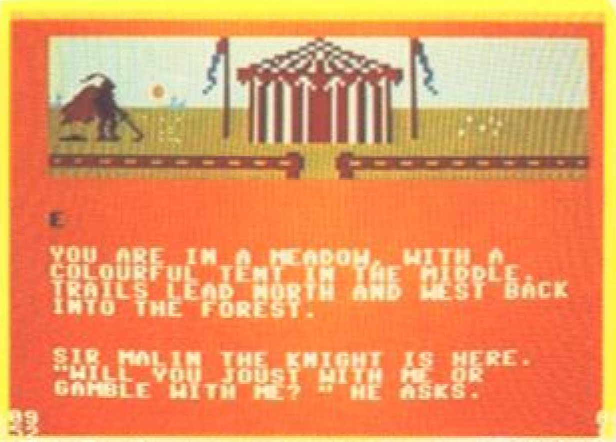
'I was told I had six weeks to do the game. I was lucky, I'd just seen the movie and I realised straightaway that I should be able to work my car screens to fit the game somehow.'

- On a snowy day in January, Sir Clive Sinclair and Sinclair Vehicles launched the C5 electric vehicle. By April the production line at Hoover in Merthyr Tydfil was cut back from 1,000 C5s a week to 100. In August production ceased altogether and in October the receiver was called in to Sinclair Vehicles. Around 4,500 C5s were sold in total; Sinclair's target was 200,000 in the first year.

- Acorn had to be famously rescued by Olivetti – twice. Its shares were suspended, first in February, and were then reinstated the same month when Olivetti took a 49.3% stake in the firm. Then in June the shares were suspended again and in August Olivetti came to the rescue again; its share of Acorn rose to 78.9%.

SPEED 048 TIME 01:29 FUEL
SPEED 050 TIME 01:29 FUEL

***Pitstop II* – one of several tremendous Epyx titles, but even games like this didn't stop the company from ceasing publication in 1989.**



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E

YOU ARE IN A MEADOW, WITH A
COLOURFUL TENT IN THE MIDDLE.
TRAILS LEAD NORTH AND WEST BACK
INTO THE FOREST.

SIR MALIN THE KNIGHT IS HERE.
"WILL YOU JOUST WITH ME OR
GAMBLE WITH ME? " HE ASKS.
```

This *Eureka* screen could hold a clue to £25000 – see the photo at the bottom of the page.

- It was with considerable relief that magazines were able to report some good news about Acorn that same month, when the beleaguered manufacturer announced that it had developed the first production models of the 32-bit RISC processor.

- Bob's your Uncle, Clive: Sinclair Research, once supreme in the UK games market, was in trouble. Production of the QL and Spectrum were halted, development work on future machines seemed to have ground to a halt. The company admitted in June that it was looking for finance and later that month Robert Maxwell's face beamed out of every newspaper in the land to announce that he would help his old friend Sir Clive out of his present spot. This was before Maxwell had seen the Sinclair accounts. Barely six weeks later the deal was off. Sir Clive responded by saying that the latest Dixon's order for £10 million worth of Spectrums, QLs and TVs meant a rescue was no longer necessary and that Sinclair Research would soldier on on its own.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Melbourne House

In 1985, Melbourne House was flying high with *Way of the Exploding Fist*, a monster summer hit which was one of the first of an enduring wave of martial arts games and success it hasn't repeated since. The original Melbourne House was set up as a UK software publishing base in 1982 for Australia-based Fred and Naomi Milgrom. Product was sourced mainly from the Milgroms' Beam Software. In 1986, Melbourne House became part of Mastertronic and today still exists as a label within the Virgin Mastertronic group. In Australia, Beam Software is now a Nintendo-approved developer and works virtually exclusively on Nintendo games for the Japanese and American market.

GAMES OF THE YEAR

Way of the Exploding Fist – seminal martial arts game which did a roaring trade all summer long.

Brataccas – the first game to give an indication of what the 16-bit micros might be capable of.

The Pawn – sneaked in on the QL late in the year, but promised much for the future of the text-based adventure and for developer Magnetic Scrolls.

SAYINGS OF THE YEAR

'Business is war'
'Business is like sex. You have to be involved'
Jack Tramiel: the Tramielisms they don't teach you at Harvard Business School

Eureka!
DOMARK
Lloyds Bank
PALL MALL BRANCH
Matthew Woodley
Twenty-five thousand pounds
£25,000
DOMARK LIMITED

Computer games go prize-crazy: Domark's *Eureka* earned the winner £25,000

Answer to Who Said This 1: The Sun, quoted in Sinclair and the Sunrise Technology, by Adamson and Kennedy (Penguin)
Answer to Who Said This 2: David Crane, programmer of Ghostbusters, the best selling computer game to date, in an interview in Popular Computing Weekly, March 7, 1985

"THE BIGGEST GAME EVER" GAMES MACHINE

the Kristal

the Kristal

"The most impressive looking backgrounds, action areas and character sprites that have been created for home screens."
"Hauntingly realistic..."
Amiga User International.

"Animation, authentic sword fights, beautiful digitised speech, an original sound track, the feel of a professional and successful stage production."
ST User.

An epic arcade and adventure game. Strategy, sword fights and space shoot 'em-ups all feature in this unique fantasy of pirates and princesses, a far-away universe and a quest for the mysterious KRISTAL of Konos.

The KRISTAL is the first of its kind...
"An experience once played never forgotten."

"£29.95 AND WELL WORTH IT TOO"
GAMES MACHINE

"The biggest game ever... exquisite backdrops."
Games Machine.

"An epic game with a style and content not yet matched in breadth of vision and development." "Mind blowing."
PREVIEW C & VG

"Complex game play, stunning graphics, nice sound and sense of humour. What more could you wish for?" **Computer Games Week.**

SCORESHEET: THE KRISTAL (AMIGA)	
Computer Games Week	92%
Commodore User	86%
The One	88%
C & V G	79%
Games Machine	90%
Zzap	91%

"THE PHENOMENAL AMIGA BEST-SELLER *NOW* AVAILABLE FOR ATARI ST & COMPATIBLE PC'S."

SCREEN SHOTS FROM ATARI ST & AMIGA VERSIONS.

Contains FREE poster and novella.

Addictive
LIVE THAT DREAM

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ACE NEW WORLDS

PAT WINSTANLEY CHECKS OUT THE LATEST FANTASY SOFTWARE

MANIAC MANSION

After the enormous success of *Zak McKracken* , U.S.Gold/Lucasfilms have revamped *Maniac Mansion* on the Amiga...and it's *horribly* good!

Here we go again, lots to talk about and only two pages to squash it all in. This month I've been shuddering at *The Hound Of Shadow* and tearing my hair out at *Maniac Mansion*. On top of that, the fire button on my joystick gave up the ghost, which put paid to any hope of attempting *Dragons of Flame* – why on earth don't programmers allow for keyboard use in an emergency?

Hound of Shadow, which Steve Cooke has already previewed on these pages, was actually a bit of a disappointment, so to solve the space problem I've held it over until next month. Meanwhile, here's a blast from the Lucasfilm past – and a very nice blast it is too...

MANIAC MANSION

This game actually appeared in Issue 2 of ACE on the C64 and has now reappeared on the Amiga. It's a typical Lucasfilm animated adventure, similar in programming style and presentation to the very successful *Zak McKracken* (which is actually a later product). The huge sales of Zak are probably responsible for this sudden resurrection of the earlier game.

Horror can be treated in all sorts of ways when applied to adventures. *Hound of Shadow* applies the blood-curdling, no-holds-barred approach, while *Scapeghost* relied on a rather more tongue-in-cheek effect. *Maniac Mansion* shows yet another way of doing it - utter craziness.

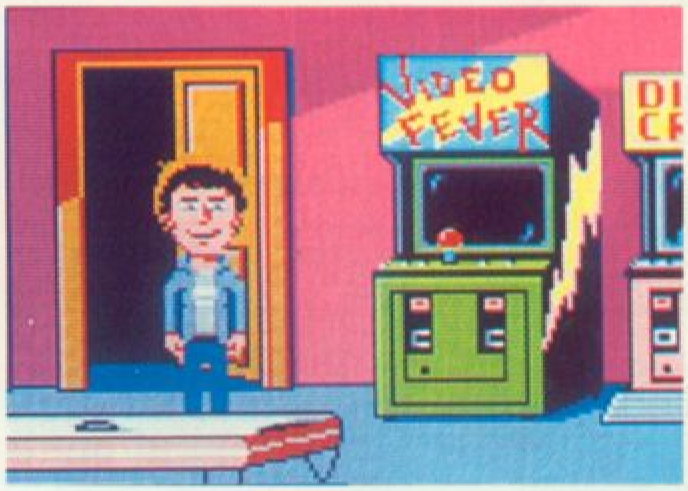
Set in Dr Fred's old mansion the plot revolves around a meteor which landed nearby and has since caused all sorts of strange effects to the mansion's occupants, both animal and vegetable. Dr Fred appears to be chopping up bodies and now he has captured Sandy, the sweet cheerleader from the local college. Your task is to control Sandy's boyfriend Dave and two of his friends in their attempt to rescue the helpless teenager.

The game is entirely mouse driven using the Lucasfilm system seen in *Zak* and *Indiana Jones*. All available commands are shown on screen so all you have to do is click on the ones you want to build up a command. Each of your three characters is independently controlled simply by choosing the one you want. In many parts of the game you'll need to have at least two, if not all three characters co-operating to solve problems. Thus one character is needed to hold open a door using a hidden switch while another enters the room.

Inhabitants of the mansion include Dr Fred himself, his nymphomaniac wife Nurse Edna and their son Ed who has a passion for his (slightly?) modified car and his ever present hamster. If any member of this weird trio should run into you you'll need to think fast to avoid being thrown in the dungeon.

Puzzles include retrieving keys from inaccessible spots, feeding giant green tentacles with warped appetites, mending a phone to allow you to make obscene calls and repairing broken wires sufficiently well to avoid cutting the power completely and thus (as I did) causing the nuclear reactor in the cellar to go into meltdown, devastating everything for miles around.

Dave's two companions are chosen from a gang of six pals, each with their own speciality. Certain puzzles in the game have different possible solutions depending upon the characters at your disposal. Bernard the physicist is a whizz at electronics while Michael is an accomplished photographer. I haven't yet figured out what Jeff the beach-bum is good for - he certainly won't retrieve the radio from the swimming pool as he won't get wet!



At times during the game action is suspended while a predetermined sequence elsewhere in the mansion is shown. These often provide useful clues to the way round specific problems and can be skipped at the touch of a button if you've seen them before. Personally I found them so funny that I watched them over and over again - especially one where Dr Fred is giving military commands to a giant purple tentacle.

Only one aspect of the system annoyed me - on the Amiga version tested an immense amount of disc swapping is required. Very often simply attempting an action which produces a negative response (such as OPEN DESK) produces a prompt to swap discs. If your next command gets a valid reaction you have to change discs again. I would guess that a twin drive system would get around this problem but it's annoying for us paupers with very basic systems. According to the documentation ST and PC users with larger capacity drives can combine both discs onto one and all three versions support the use of a hard disc.

RELEASE BOX

ATARI ST	£TBA	TBA
AMIGA	£24.99dk	OUT NOW
C64/128	£14.99dk	OUT NOW
IBM PC	£TBA	TBA

LANDSCAPE 90
Beautifully clear, yet detailed graphics make the game a pleasure to play. Character movement and scrolling can be a little jerky but is rarely noticed after a while.

ENCOUNTERS..95
Interacting with both player and non-player characters is limited to giving objects but the responses are hilarious.

CHALLENGE..85
This one's a real brain stretcher with kick-yourself solutions to many puzzles. Working out how to make your characters co-operate is the best part.

SYSTEM 80
Very easy to use with the exception of multiple disc swapping mentioned above.

ACE RATING
850

Buy it. Play it. Change characters and play it again... and again....! This one should become a classic.
(C64 version already reviewed in Issue 2: rated 820)

STARWRECK

Want to write your own adventure – and get it on the market? Time was when adventurers everywhere were turning semi-professional using adventure generators like *The Quill* and *GAC*. The 16-bit *STAC* generator, however, doesn't seem to have resulted in many commercial releases. Here's an exception...

Despite STAC having been available for well over a year now very few games written with the utility have been released commercially, although quite a lot have found their way into the Public Domain. Now joining the commercial releases is *Starwreck*, programmed by Chris Jones of Castlesoft and distributed by HAT Software (better known as distributors of educational programs).

Starwreck concerns the voyages of the U.S.S. LESS and her captain Jimmy Birk. The ship needs replenishment of delerium crystals and is forced to land on a Clinker planet. You are delegated to 'borrow' a few crystals from the Clinkers despite being as popular with them as the Black Death.

As a spoof the scenario works well but the standard of programming leaves much to be desired and causes frustrations of its own which tend to detract from the well crafted atmosphere. Your first task is simply to leave the ship and enter the (relative) safety of the spaceport. This entails finding and assembling a spacesuit and avoiding death from flying debris on operating the airlock.

Several bugs became apparent in this early stage. For instance, a rather strange nightcap is discovered in the sleeping quarters which is capable of being taken and subsequently appears in the inventory. However, try dropping it and you are told you don't have it. Another interesting item is the teleporting torch - open it to be transported to an entirely different section of the game - nice short cut, but that really should have been removed before the final release version. Another problem which is due more to poor system design than anything is that when objects are dropped they do not appear in the room description.

Later in the game you must contend with shortages of air, food and drink, each leading to death if not overcome within a few moves. Unfortunately the normal trial and error approach is marred by having to reload the entire game including typing in your name and a protection password (one of which is wrong) every time you die. Since death comes frequently and move sequences leave little room for typing errors, extreme patience (and lots of coffee making) are required to succeed.

Enough of the bugs because on the whole *Starwreck*, despite its system faults, is a very enjoyable adventure. The puzzles are satisfying to solve and usually of the kick-yourself type. The author cleverly disguises the nature of some objects by placing them in environments which imply an alternative meaning to their names. Careful examination of everything is a must.

The graphics are well drawn and even animated in places (not easy with STAC) and depict both locations and objects. Good use of colour schemes enhances the atmosphere by emphasising the contrast between the filthy messroom and a nearby hotel.

My major moan though has to be the price of the game. I just can't see the justification for a £20 price tag even with the bugs removed. *Starwreck* is well worth playing but I'd have preferred to see it offered at around half the current asking price.

LANDSCAPE 55
Plenty of places to explore with effectively atmospheric text.

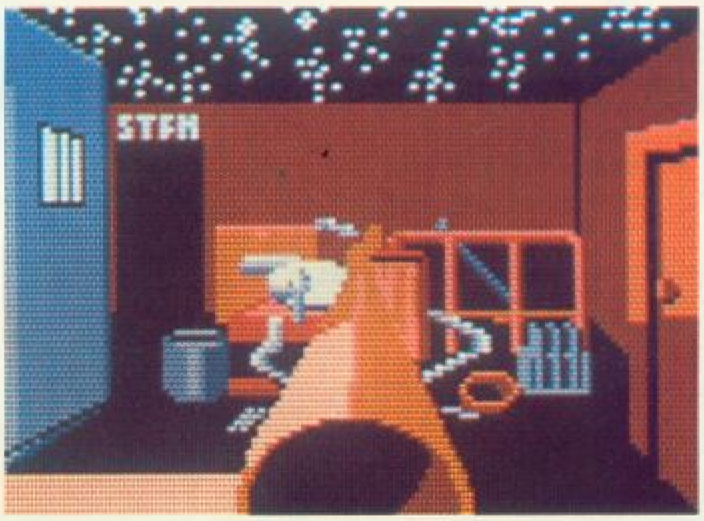
ENCOUNTERS......................................25
Character interaction is very limited – mainly static and non-conversational.

CHALLENGE..80
Clever puzzles with lashings of humour and unexpected twists save the game from oblivion.

SYSTEM 10
Modifications to the standard STAC system are badly implemented and the number of bugs is inexcusable.

ACE RATING
500

Despite errors and bad system design, the game is fun to play – but badly overpriced.



SNIPPETS

There's been some interesting deveopments on the dial-in helpline front: the Guiding Light is experiencing some turmoil at the moment having been caught in the current clean-up campaign for chatlines. Instead of its original concept of one-to-one help for anybody, callers will now be greeted by a compulsory taped message and calls themselves will be taped for monitoring by the authorities. It also seems likely that group chats will become the order of the day with under 18s banned from the lines.

The number remains the same 0898 338 933 (noon to 8.00pm - 25p per min cheap rate/38p per min other times). What a shame to see responsible operators caught in the same net as the more unscrupulous concerns.

HELP!

For those who prefer to play with help constantly at hand Mike Gerrard (of Your Sinclair fame) has just released a new book. "Adventures on the Spectrum" is in two sections. The first 30 pages cover topics such as hints for beginners, adventure clubs and writing/selling games while the remaining 80 pages contain complete solutions to 43 of the most popular Spectrum adventures. Quite a few of the games are also available on other machines, both 8 and 16 bit so there's something here for everyone. Similarly the introductory sections can be applied to any machine although written from the Spectrum point of view. At £4.95 the book is a good buy for any self-respecting adventurer. (Postage is a measly 5p in the UK or £1.05 elsewhere.) Available from Mike Gerrard, PO Box 7, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE17 2UZ.

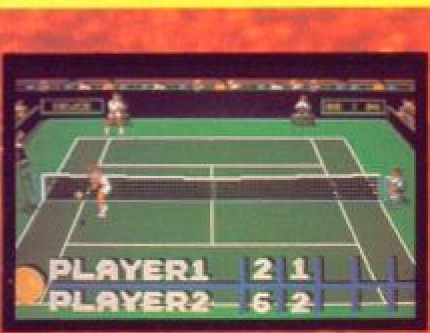
FLAME OUT

Just in time for a glimpse this month is the Amiga version of *Dragons Of Flame* which appears very similar to the ST version. Further comment will have to wait for a working joystick! Also too late for review this time is *Dead End* from Interactive Technology which is a text/graphics adventure (ST, C64 tape/disc & Spectrum tape only) inspired by the Philip Marlowe film Farewell My Lovely and featuring graphics taken from the film.

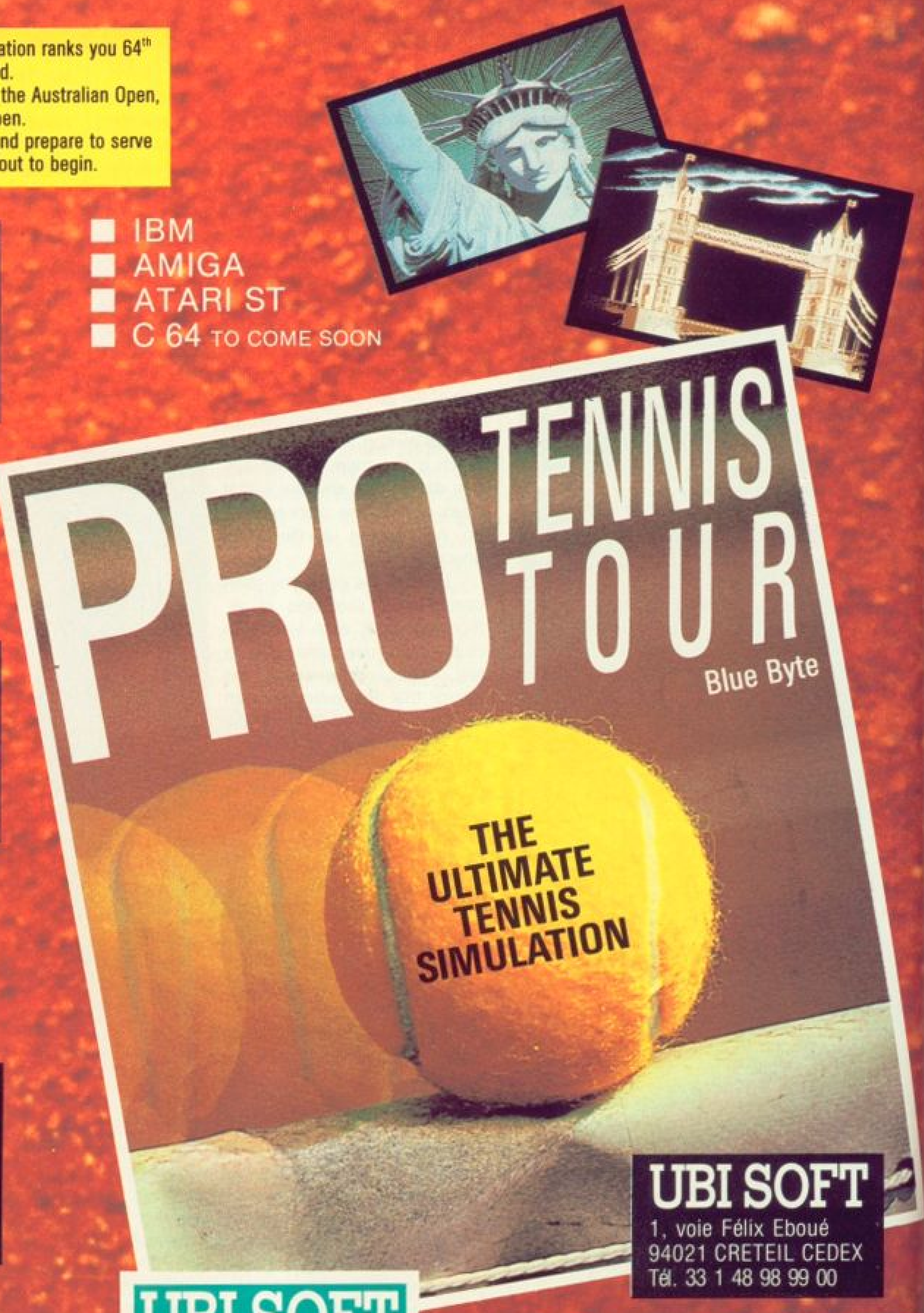
OKAY TENNIS ACE

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE TO COMPETE WITH THE BEST.

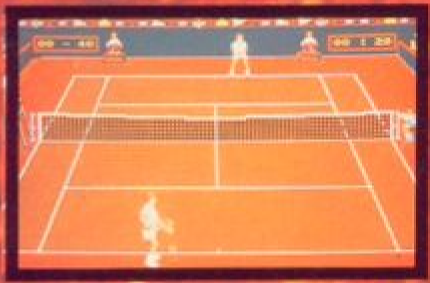
Pro Tennis Tour - The Ultimate Tennis Simulation ranks you 64th amongst the best tennis players in the world.
Set your sights on such championships as the Australian Open, Roland Garros, Wimbledon, and the US Open.
Step into center court, tighten your grip and prepare to serve up your best shot - Pro Tennis Tour is about to begin.



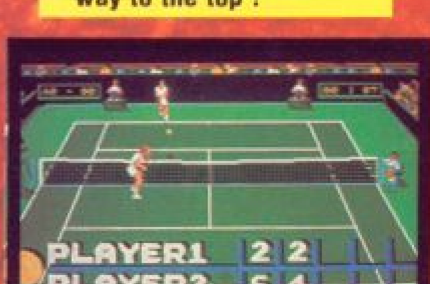
- IBM
- AMIGA
- ATARI ST
- C 64 TO COME SOON



Warm up on one of six practice programs containing three levels of increasing difficulty. **Put away shots** like a Pro ! **Master** back-hand volleys, passing shots, and other winning tennis strokes.



Rush the net with confidence, knowing you can strategically place your next return. **Feel the excitement** build as you challenge your next opponent and **make your way to the top !**



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Screen shots represent Amiga versions; others may vary.
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IN THE PINK

THE ACE DIARY 100
Every month, we give you the dates you need to know for the coming weeks. Watch out this time for Martin Luther Game day on the 15th January and – a bit more interesting – *Dungeon Master* on the PC! Don't forget: if you've got something to shout about, let the Diary Editor know at the usual ACE address (see page 4).

ACE DEALS...101
Somewhere, there's someone offering a special offer. Each month ACE tracks down the dealers who've got something to give away – and there just might be one round the corner from you. Check the ACE DEALS page to find out...

GAMES YOU HAVE TO HAVE 102
A shorter section this month due to lack of space, but we've still managed to include full details and mini-reviews of arcade style games, adventures, puzzles, and 'specials'. These are the titles you just can't afford to miss.

ACE UPGRADE VOUCHERS......................113
This month, due to the demand from the last issue, we're extending our £20 upgrade offer, and also including increased discounts on memory upgrades and external disk drives for 16-bit owners. We'll also be expanding the voucher system in the near future, so stand by for yet more bargains in 1990.

PICTIONARY COMPO 114
Stuck for something to do on the cold, wet afternoons? What better than a game of the hugely popular Pictionary. We've got five Pictionary board games to give away to five lucky readers... all you have to do is answer some ridiculously easy questions and pop the entry form in the post. Just to keep us up to date with our readers, there are also some survey questions on the form: fill them in and you could qualify for an extra mystery software prize.

THE ACE CROSSWORD............................118
Back after a long absence, the infamous ACE crossword returns for another stint of regular appearances...and with the right grid!

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS................120
We have news for you: ACE is going places in 1990, and we want you to come too.

ACE DIARY

IMPORTANT DATES AND GAME RELEASES IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1990

JANUARY

SUNDAY 14TH – SATURDAY 20TH

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Melbourne House: *Demon's Tomb* (all formats)
Arcade adventure with Egyptological scenario and big bold graphics.

Mastertronic: *Hunter Killer* (8-bit formats)

Mastertronic: *Conflict* (8-bit formats)

Palace: *Barbarian II* (PC)
One of the more gory of the hack'n'slay genre, more famous for its cover picture than the game itself.

CDS: *Colossus Chess X* (PC)
Highly rated chess program.

Grandslam: *Peter Beardsley* (8-bits, inc MSX)
Yet another big name soccer sim.

Pandora: *Xenomorph* (ST, Amiga)

Infogrames: *Drakkhen* (ST, Amiga, PC)
Text and graphic adventure with mystical atmosphere.

Sunday 14
Last day of the 16-bit Computer Fair, being held on January 12-14, at the Royal Horticultural Hall, London SW1. Demos and bargains for ST and Amiga owners.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 15
Martin Luther King Day, USA
110th anniversary of the telephone directory - the first one was published for the London area, and had a grand total of 255 names and numbers.

Tuesday 16
70th anniversary of US prohibition: the laws which began 13 years in which the sale of alcoholic liquor was banned throughout the country. The result was a thriving black market, which made some racketeers extremely powerful and wealthy. The police investigation of illegal liquor sales in Chicago inspired the film *The Untouchables* and its computer game derivative.

Friday 19
Feast day of St Canute the Fourth, an 11th century Danish king, chiefly remembered for his attempted invasions of Yorkshire in 1075 and again in 1085.

SUNDAY 21ST – SATURDAY 27TH

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Domark: *Cyberball* (all formats)
Futuristic American football played with giant robots. A Tengen coin-op conversion.

Rainbird: *Midwinter* (16-bit formats)
Mike Singleton's extensively researched strategy/survival game, previewed in last month's ACE.

Rainbow Arts: *X-Out* (all formats)

Gainstar: *Dungeon Quest* (Amiga)

Novagen: *Damocles* (ST, Amiga)
It's been a long, long time coming, but the signs are that the follow-up to *Mercenary* and *Backlash* might just be worth the wait.

Mindscape/Origin: *Windwalker* (C64)
Martial arts: kick and chop your way to wisdom and spiritual awakening.

Elite: *Overlander* (Amiga)
Coin-op conversion and 2,000th racing game to appear on the Amiga.

IMPORTANT DATES

Sunday 21
50th birthday of golfer Jack Nicklaus

Tuesday 23
MacWorld Expo opens at the Business Design Centre, Islington, London N1.

Thursday 25
Burns Night - invite a few friends round for haggis and poetry reading.

Friday 26
National Day, Australia
Republic Day, India

SUNDAY 28TH – SATURDAY 3RD

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Electronic Arts: *Sentinel Worlds* (C64)

Electronic Arts: *Panzer Battles* (PC)

Electronic Arts: *Budokan* (PC)
Highly refined martial arts game.

Mindscape: *Guns and Butter* (PC)
Chris Crawford follow-up to *Balance of Power*, set in peacetime and dealing with economic rather than military conflicts.

Image Works: *Blade Warrior* (Amiga, ST, PC)

Mirrorsoft: *Dungeon Master* (PC)
Role-playing game acclaimed for authenticity and graphic sophistication.

Mirrorsoft: *Harpoon* (PC)
NATO vs Warsaw Pact strategy game. If there is a Warsaw Pact by the time this is released, that is.

Mirrorsoft: *Interphase* (PC)

Mirrorsoft: *Wolfpack* (PC)
Naval wargame set in World War II. "Makes proper use of VGA graphics", according to the company.

Empire: *Pipe Dream* (all 16-bits)
Lucasfilm game based (fairly loosely) on the sliding block puzzle idea.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 3
Feast day of St Ia, who was popularly supposed to have sailed to Cornwall from Ireland on a floating leaf. She is said to have landed and settled on the spot where the town of St Ives now stands.

WEEK'S RELEASES AT A GLANCE

Accolade: *The Cycles* (ST)
Motorbiking from a first person viewpoint, with authentic tilt and acceleration effects programmed in.

Melbourne House: *Grimblood* (16-bit formats)
Horror yarn set in Gothic-look Castle Grimblood.

Virgin: *Dan Dare III* (ST, Amiga, PC)
More adventures with the pilot of the future and the evil Mekon in Dan's 16-bit debut.

IMPORTANT DATES

Monday 4
Independence Commemoration Day, Sri Lanka

Wednesday 6
Waitangi Day, New Zealand
79th birthday of Ronald Reagan

Friday 8
Birthday of James Dean, 1931
Crufts Dog show opens.

ACE DIARY FORM

Please include the enclosed details in the earliest possible ACE DIARY. (Please make sure you send us your details as far in advance of the event as you can.)

COMPANY:..................................
ADDRESS:..................................
....
....
PHONE:..................................
FAX:..................................
NATURE OF EVENT:..................................
....
DETAILS ENCLOSED ☐

FREE PUBLICITY!

That's right – if you've got something going on that you think should feature in the ACE Diary, then let us know. We'll fit in as much as we can (subject matter permitting), so drop us the details, with the form above, to:

ACE Diary,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
LONDON,
EC1R 3AU

Alternatively send us the details by fax on: 01-490 0991

ACE DEALERS

Great Deals and Promotions for January/February 1990

There are great offers and competitions to be found at software stores up and down the country in January. Many outlets will be having sales, so check up on your local store for some discounted bargains.

JANUARY SALES

The Software Superstore chain, for example, has been digging around in the vaults to come up with back catalogue games at knock-down prices. Visit Software Superstore during the sale and you should find titles such as *Running Man*, *Thunderbirds*, *Barbarian II* and *Afterburner* at just £3.99.

Retail managers up and down the country reckon your pockets are bulging with gift vouchers and Christmas money, and they're just dying for you to spend it all in their stores, so there are plenty of tempting freebies and special offers to lure you into the shop.

DRIVE-IN GIVEAWAYS

Look out for shops giving away model Porsche 959s and Ferrari F40s with Accolade's products, either just with *Test Drive II* (Software Superstore again), or with any Accolade game (the Microbyte chain also has a limited selection of Ferraris mounted on a walnut plinth).

Virgin Games Centres up and down the country will also be having a January sale, plus a special Sierra On-line promotion with *Hero's Quest* and *Leisure Suit Larry III* - details were still being finalised as *ACE* went to press.

At Bits and Bytes in Liverpool, there's a goodies bag being given away with *Turbo OutRun*, and competitions to enter when you buy *Chase HQ*, *Ghostbusters II* or any Mirrorsoft title. Prizes include Walkmans, VCRs, and TV sets, both full-size and hand-held.

OCEANS OF PRIZES

Buyers in Newcastle and Nottingham should make their way to the Green Market and Broadmarsh Centre respectively on January 13. In the Newcastle branch of Microbyte it's a special Ocean day. Posters for everyone who walks through the door, T-shirts for everyone who buys an Ocean game, Sony Walkmans for competition winners.

In Microbyte in the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham, the giveaways aren't associated with any one particular label - but no-one who visits the store will leave empty-handed.

In the December issue of *ACE*, we reported that Microbyte wasopening up stores-within-stores in Top Man outlets, called Toys for the Boys. Unfortunately things haven't really worked out, and these are now being closed down. So, if it's computer games you're after, don't go looking in Top Man any more.

Finally, on the hardware side, if you got a new computer for Christmas, visit your nearest Software Superstore and pick up one of their leaflets on your machine. It will tell you all about the software and products you can buy for your particular format. There are leaflets covering the Spectrum, CPC, Commodore 64, ST, Amiga and PC and they're available free of charge.

Software Superstore has outlets at Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, The Waingate, Sheffield, Little Underbank in Stockport and the centre of St Helen's. There are Microbyte stores in the Arndale Centre, Manchester; Goosegate, and the Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham; Kirkgate, Wakefield; the Metro Centre, Gateshead; the Greenmarket, Newcastle Upon Tyne; the Kirkgate Centre, Bradford; the Bull RingCentre, Birmingham; and the County Arcade, Leeds.

Virgin has its Games Centre outlets on London's Oxford Street (at Marble Arch, within the Megastore, and at no 100) and Bristol, and also in Megastores in Birmingham, Brighton, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow (at Union St and Argyle St), Leeds, and Nottingham. One of these must be near you!

All offers and promotions are subject to availability of stock.

Although we do our best to ensure our dealer promotion information is accurate at the time of going to press, *ACE* cannot take any responsibility for changes or cancellations to dealers' plans.

Attention dealers! Don't keep your promotions, competitions, special offers, etc, a secret. Tell us at *ACE* and we'll tell everybody else.

ACE DEALERS FORM

Dealers – don't keep our readers in the dark: you want to sell, they want to buy. its the perfect relationship. Send details of your promotions and events to us, and we'll let everyone know about them. Just fill in the form and send it with your press pack to: ACE DEALERS PAGE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU

COMPANY..
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PROMOTION/EVENT ....
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DETAILS ENCLOSED ☐

THE GAMES YOU HAVE TO HAVE...

SOMETIMES YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT TO FACE UP TO THE TRUTH. YOUR SOFTWARE COLLECTION IS GETTING YOU DOWN, YOUR DOG'S SICK, YOUR FRIENDS ARE CONVINCED IT WAS YOU THAT LOST THE WINNING POOLS COUPON, YOUR MOTHER HAS DECIDED YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR IMAGE, AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND (OR BOYFRIEND) HAS JUST BEEN EATEN BY A ROTTWEILER...THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT...GO OUT AND GET A NEW GAME. AND TO MAKE SURE YOU REALLY SEE THE BRIGHT SIDE, HERE'S A LIST OF GAMES YOU'VE JUST GOT TO ADD TO YOUR COLLECTION.

ARCADE STYLE

Including coin-op conversions. Games with a high fun factor and plenty of addictive action feature in this category.

ARKANOID

Imagine ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari XL/XE £8.95cs ● Atari ST £14.95dk ● MSX £8.95cs ● IBM PC £19.95dk

Conversion from *Arkanoid* the coin-op, in its turn the best version of the classic *Breakout*. Simple in concept: the player controls a bat at the base of the screen, whizzing it left and right. The object is to keep a small ball in play, bouncing it off the bat to destroy formations of bricks in the top half of the screen. Eliminate all the bricks and move on to the next of 33 screens. Clever extra features contribute to the addictiveness. As a faithful coin-op conversion, *Arkanoid* comes out top, but for a different slant on the same theme and some nifty music, try ASL's *Impact*, which also builds up the difficulty levels more gradually.

★ ACE CLASSIC

BOUNDER

Gremlin Graphics ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £13.95dk

A great arcade bounce-em-up, and very addictive too. You guide a ball as it bounces from one platform to another, high above the vertically scrolling landscape. Land on marked squares and you can stay aloft longer or gain a mystery bonus. Fill in a gap or hit one of the game's many nasties, however, and you'll lose a life. Bonus bouncing sections at the end of each level help vary the pace, and those tough gaps really keep you coming back for more. Bright, witty graphics, great music – and it's so playable.

★ ACE CLASSIC

BUBBLE BOBBLE

Firebird ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Playability is the essence of this two-player coin-op conversion. You and a friend play bubble-blowing dinosaurs, travelling through 100 maze-and-platform screens, fighting off the 'bullies' by encapsulating them in your bubbles to turn them into juicy fruit. More firepower and various bonuses await as you reach the more difficult later screens. Enormously good fun, if a little on the cutesy side. Can also be played as one-player against the computer.

★ ACE RATED 958

CONQUEROR

Superior ● Archimedes £24.95dk (Amiga and ST versions under development)

Drive around in your very own tank! Blast the enemy in close combat and plan your strategy for the campaign. This is a tricky game to get to grips with, but if you persevere you'll find you soon become mesmerised by the thing. If you ain't got a 1Mb Archie though – forget it!

★ ACE RATED 931

ELIMINATOR

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.99cs £12.99dk ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Graphically wonderful roadway blast-em-up by John Phillips, which will twist your joystick inside-out. It'll even have you driving on the ceiling. Though it's tough to get to grips with at first, the addiction level's so great you'll keep coming back for more.

★ ACE RATED 904

EXOLON

Hewson ● Spectrum £7.95cs ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £14.95dk

Graphically superb horizontally scrolling shoot-em-up in which you run, duck and jump your way along a planet's surface blasting away at alien defences. A gun and a missile launcher are used to blast the foes, but if things are still too tough then you can grab an exoskeleton for extra protection and fire power.

★ ACE CLASSIC

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Ocean ● Spectrum £8.95cs, C64 £9.95cs, Amstrad £9.95cs, ST £19.99, Amiga £24.99

Although pipped at the post in a head to head with Rainbow Islands, New Zealand Story is not a game to be ruled out. It is immense fun to play, provides lots of varied action across many levels. Definitely worth checking out.

★ ACE RATED 875

OIDS

Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £19.99dk

A magnificent *Thrust*-ish blast. The Oids are relying on you to save them, but the Biocretes aren't going to let them go without throwing missiles, rockets and a number of other weapons at you. Included with the program is an edit facility that allows you to design your own planetoids – great stuff!

★ ACE RATED 969

PITSTOP 2

Epyx/US Gold ● Available only on Epyx Epics compilation ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk (in compilation with *Winter Games* and *Summer Games 2*)

Thrilling racing game where the screen is split into two and you can race the computer or a friend. Lots of different Grand Prix circuits, tyre blow-outs and of course the all-important pitstops guarantee to give you hand cramp and your brain a real racing treat.

★ ACE CLASSIC

POWERDROME

Electronic Arts ● Atari ST £24.95dk

This superb arcade-style futuristic driving simulation will have you enthralled for months to come. It may not be terribly easy to get straight into but it's well worth persevering with. You'll be playing this for months.

★ ACE RATED 925

PURPLE SATURN DAY

Exxos ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95

A terrific mix of games that delivers punch both audio and visual. The consistently good gameplay ensures you'll enjoy playing each sub-game time and again. It's a little tricky to get the hang off, but master it and you'll be pleased you persevered.

★ ACE RATED 912

RAINBOW ISLANDS

Firebird, Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk, C64 £9.99cs $14.99dk, Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk, ST £24.99, Amiga £24.99

The sequel to Bubble Bobble is nothing short of fantastic. The graphics and sound are superb, as is the gameplay.
One of the best (and cutest arcade conver-

sions of the year that should not be missed.
★ ACE RATED 934

RVF
Microstyle, ST £24.99, Amiga £29.99

RVF offers a near endless supply of fast paced bike action as you race your Honda RVF. Attention to detail is paid out all along the route with your rider giving the bike a push start after a crash.
An excellent mix of arcade and simulation.
★ ACE RATED 915

SPIDERTRONIC
Ere International ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Guide your spider-like character around the game area, collecting coloured panels in the correct order. The built-in construction set means you'll be knocking out your own levels till the cows come home.
★ ACE RATED 903

SUMMER GAMES
Epyx/US Gold ● C64 £9.95 cs £14.95dk ● IBM PC £29.95dk

Epyx sporting simulations are of high quality but none have quite captured the playability and style of the original *Summer Games* and its immediate successor, *Summer Games 2*. One to six players can take part in high jump, gymnastics, springboard diving, clay pigeon shooting, swimming, pole vault – and others – with lovely large graphics and smooth animation throughout. Control of your athlete can be complex so practice is recommended.
★ ACE CLASSIC

SUPER SPRINT
Electric Dreams ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99dk Amstrad £9.99cs Spectrum £9.99cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk

One of the better coin-op conversions currently available. With up to three players all competing at once, the action is fast and furious and it will take a finely-tuned car to complete some of the more tortuous circuits that appear later in the game.
★ ACE RATED 907

THRUST
Firebird ● Spectrum £1.99cs ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs

Terrifyingly sensitive controls and a large helping of real-life physics make this budget title an absolute must. Flying down through the caverns of an enemy-held planet, you have to pick up fuel and destroy hostile gun turrets without crashing into the tunnel walls. Tough enough as it is, but then you've got to make the return journey with a heavy load slung under your craft. Very mean, very addictive.
★ ACE CLASSIC

URIDIUM
Hewson ● Spectrum £8.95cs ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● BBC £9.95cs £14.95dk

The piece de resistance of scrolling shoot-em-ups: blast the dreadnought and attacking ships while dodging around any large structures. Great metallic-looking dreadnoughts and the smoothest scrolling you'll ever see put this head and shoulders above the opposition. A game not to be missed, especially now that C64 versions come packaged with the excellent *Paradroid*.
ACE CLASSIC

ZARCH / VIRUS
Superior Software ● Archimedes £19.95dk ● Firebird (16 and 8-bit versions) Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Some 8-bit versions under development

A solid three dimensional shoot-em-up with such graphic perfection and timelessly addictive gameplay that it became an instant classic. Now the 16-bit versions have arrived and they're just as good as the 32-bit versions.
★ ACE RATED 981

ADVENTURES

After a brief surge of RPG–related popularity, the traditional text-entry adventure is rapidly disappearing. But for those of you who savour the powers of the imagination, the verbal twist, and the thrill of encountering other characters, this game genre still has much to recommend it. Here are some of the all-time great computer fantasies...

BEYOND ZORK
Infocom/Activision ● C64 £19.99dk ● PC £24.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk ● Atari ST £24.99dk

Infocom's attempt to muscle in on the role-playing market is a great success. Locate the fabulous Coconut of Quendor in a game that combines the wit and ingenuity of one of the world's most original software companies with state-of-the-art parsing and gameplay. Text-only, but with an on-screen mapping facility.
★ ACE RATED 902

CORRUPTION
Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● C64 £17.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk

This tale of insider dealings, infidelity and crooked business deals is unlikely to appeal to adventurers who prefer to wander through vast dungeon networks seeking treasure. But for those who are fed up with traditional adventuring, it's like a breath of fresh air. Superb graphics, great atmosphere and a nail-biting plot makes this a terrific game that grips from the start.
★ ACE RATED 920

FISH
Magnetic Scrolls ● PC £24.99dk Amiga £24.99dk

More gameplay than *Corruption*, better game design than *Jinxter*, and not as quirky as *The Pawn*. This is definitely MS's best release since *Guild Of Thieves*. Good stuff indeed.
★ ACE RATED

GUILD OF THIEVES
Rainbird ● C64 £19.95dk ● Spectrum £15.95dk ● Amstrad 6128 £19.95dk ● Amiga £24.95dk ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● PC £24.95dk

One of Britain's newer adventure software houses – Magnetic Scrolls – managed to produce a traditional treasure hunt with superb graphics and some very tricky puzzles. Powerful parser helps to create a convincing game world with humour and imagination.
★ ACE CLASSIC

INGRID'S BACK
Level 9 ● Atari ST £19.95dk

A great follow-up to *Gnome Ranger*. Level 9 have really got to grips with the use of characters in their games and how to program them very effectively.
★ ACE RATED 920

JEWELS OF DARKNESS
Rainbird ● C64 £14.95cs ● Spectrum 128 £14.95cs ● Amstrad £14.95cs £19.95dk ● PC £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.95dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk

Level 9 have put together three of their classic releases, *Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure* and *Adventure Quest* in one bundle. The games have been updated with graphics and larger vocabularies and are as close to the original spirit of adventuring as you're likely to find.
★ ACE CLASSIC

LURKING HORROR
Infocom/Mediagenic ● C64 £19.99dk ● ST £24.99 I Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99

Infocom's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft and the horror-fantasy genre sends you into a cold sweat as you discover something very nasty lurking beneath your college laboratory. Superb text-only game that defies you to play it after dark...
★ ACE CLASSIC

TIME AND MAGIK
Mandarin ● Spectrum £14.95cs £14.95dk ● C64 £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £14.95cs £14.95dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● PC £19.99dk

This compilation of the Level 9 games, *Lords Of Time, Red Moon* and *The Price Of Magik* have been re-vamped with better parsing, bigger vocabularies and pictures added. Superb value if you don't already own them.
★ ACE RATED 919

ZORK ZERO
Infocom Versions due out about now. Watch this space for price info. Highly enjoyable with a variety of challenges that make for instant addiction. A bit more character interaction would have made this a real humdinger, but even so it remains one of the best games of the year so far.
★ ACE RATED

PUZZLES

If you're after a game that will provide you with a real challenge, without necessarily requiring large doses of strategic thinking, then it's a puzzle game you want.

BONECRUNCHER
Superior Software ● C64 £9.95cs11.95dk ● Amiga £14.95

At first sight this recent release may appear to be nothing more than a boulderdash rip-off. However there are a number of innovative gameplay features which give Bonecruncher a feel all of its own. Highly recommended for those who prefer to solve problems rather than shoot them.
★ ACE RATED 948 – AMIGA

BOULDERDASH
Prism Leisure Corporation ● Spectrum £2.99cs ● C64 £2.99cs ● Amstrad £2.99cs

A game that has everything – instant addiction, long-term challenge, frenetic excitement as the clock ticks down and extremely tricky puzzles. You must collect jewels hidden in caverns, digging away earth and boulders to get tat them. Boulders can drop and cause you serious damage, while the jewels are often hidden by seemingly impenetrable walls. Complex but great fun. Boulderdash is a classic you can't afford to miss in its budget incarnation.
★ ACE CLASSIC

DEFLEKTOR
Gremlin/Vortex ● C64 £9.99cs ● Spectrum £7.99cs ● ST £19.95dk

Optics are the order of the day here (not the spirit dispensers) as the player tries to connect a laser beam to a receiver and at the same time destroy a

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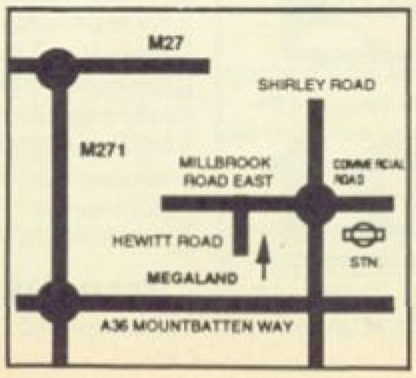

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number of cells that are on screen as well. You'll need to make full use of the mirrors, fibre-optic conduits and polarising and refracting blocks if you're to achieve your aim. Clear the first screen and you'll only have 59 more to do. Fascinating stuff that's horribly addictive.

★ ACE RATED 906 – ST

NEBULUS

Hewson ● C64 £9.99cs £14.99 dk● Atari ST £14.99 dk

Guide pogo to the top of eight towers using the spiral of platforms, lifts and ledges that form the route. It's a highly original game that strikes a fine balance between frustration and addiction, added to which is the rotary scroll, thus making it a good-looking, playable winner of a game.

★ ACE RATED 943 - C64

SENTINEL

Firebird ● Spectrum £9.95 cs ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk

Bizarre and compelling strategy game played over the chequered surface of a planet dominated by the Sentinel. Fundamentally you have to absorb energy while trying to stop the Sentinel from absorbing yours. A clean brain and fast trigger finger are both necessary in this very original and large - 10,000 possible landscapes - game.

★ ACE RATED 963 - AMIGA

SKULL DIGGERY

Nexus● Atari ST £19.95

Boulderdash clone that completely outdoes the original on this particular machine. Again (see Boulderdash above) you're digging for diamonds in caverns over a hundred different screens - with a time limit for each screen. Skulldiggery scores on playability (easier screens to begin with and a choice of starting point) and its entertaining two-player option.

★ ACE RATED 919 - ST

SPORE

Bulldog ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

The winning combination of strategy, frenzied blasting and great graphics make Spore a worthy full-priced release - what a bargain then to be able to pick it up for £1.99!

★ ACE RATED 919 - C64

TETRIS

Mirrorsoft ● Spectrum £8.99 cs ● C64 £8.99cs £12.99dk ● Amstrad £8.99cs £12.99 dk ● Atari ST £19.95dk ● Amiga £19.99dk ● IBM PC £19.99dk

A fascinating geometrical oddity, this Russian puzzler turns the obscure mathematical topic of packing into a cult game. One at a time, shapes fall downwards into a rectangular playing area. Left to their own devices they'll pile up until they reach the top of the screen; your task is to guide them down and pack them tightly so that doesn't happen. Different versions have proved to be rather variable in their arcade aspects, but the brilliantly simple idea behind them means they're well worth a look whatever your machine.

★ ACE RATED 959 - C64

THINK!

Firebird ● C64 £1.99cs ● Amstrad £1.99cs ● Spectrum £1.99cs

Originally released by Ariolasoft at full price, but now available for a fraction of that from Firebird. It's a horribly addictive game played on a 6x6 grid - either one or two player - in which you attempt to connect four counters, horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

★ ACE CLASSIC

XOR

Logotron ● BBC £9.95cs £12.85dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £7.95cs

Extremely tricky maze game involving the player controlling two shields, and collecting masks through 15 mazes, which increase in complexity as you progress. Also in later stages, fish and chickens lie in wait, often blocking the masks and just waiting to fall on you and bring your quest to a premature end. Later still, things hot up as bombs, transporters and dolls conspire against you. Smooth scrolling, simple graphics, this one requires planning to complete successfully.

SPECIALS

Original works that are simply unclassifiable feature in this sec˜ tion.

ATF

Digital Integration ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs £12.95dk● Spectrum £8.95cs £13.95dk

Excellent combat/flight simulator that's a bit of a change for Digital Integration, the simulation specialist. The emphasis is on solid action, the result being a sure-fire hit.

★ ACE RATED 956 - SPECTRUM

DARK SIDE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk

The second game using the Freescape programming system, which sets more of an arcade challenge. The 3-D graphics are again superb as are the tasks and puzzles.

★ ACE RATED 915 - AMSTRAD

ELITE

Firebird ● C64 £14.95cs £17.95dk ● Amstrad £12.95cs £14.95dk● Spectrum £14.95cs ● BBC £13.95cs £14.95dk (available from Superior software)

Still the best space trading game, Elite set a standard for other companies to follow. One of the first space games to use vector graphics, it's a shooting and trading effort set across several galaxies, with plenty of variety to the game play. You can trade legal goods in (relatively) safe systems, or run the gauntlet of pirates in the galaxies' danger spots with your hold full of contraband. Either way there's a nice line in zero-G dogfighting, and as big a task as you'll find anywhere.

★ ACE CLASSIC

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

Electric Dreams ● C64 £8.99cs £14.99dk ● Amstrad £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Spectrum £9.99cs £14.99dk ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

A manic maze world where mass, size and inertia combine to provide wicked gameplay. Tricky puzzles and endless nasty obstacles will have you rolling around in delight.

★ ACE RATED 923 - C64

M1 TANK PLATOON

Microprose ● PC £39.99dk

This is a welcome break from flight-sims that boasts enough detail to keep even the most compulsive nitpicker happy, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamester. A winner.

★ ACE RATED 926

MAGNETRON-

Firebird ● C64 £8.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £8.95cs £12.95dk

Puzzles and action Steve Turner style. Save the world by dismantling eight satellites. Steal parts from enemy droids to upgrade your own droid and hopefully make your job a little easier. The ideal game for Quazatron fans looking for a similar, new challenge.

★ ACE RATED 904 - SPECTRUM

QUEDEX

Thalamus ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk

In this impressively challenging game you must steer a metallic ball through ten different screens of mazes, bonuses and obstacles, all within a set time limit. This simple game concept has a host of added features to make it particularly pleasing: you can carry over unused time to the next screen, for example, and tackle the different screens or 'planes' in any order you wish. Excellent graphics and utterly absorbing play.

★ ACE RATED 934 - C64

SPINDIZZY

Electric Dreams ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95 Disk

Tremendous stuff; steer your spinning top over tough obstacles and collect jewels, against a fiendish time limit. The game landscape is a vast system of catwalks, ramps, towers and trampolines surrounded by lethal drops - and NO safety rails. Floor switches activate lifts and bridge traps, but tripping them in the right order can be harder than it looks. A few bad guys and a lot of nice touches, but the explorations the thing.

★ ACE CLASSIC

STARGLIDER II

Rainbird ● Atari ST £24.95dk ● Amiga £24.99dk

One of the finest examples of a game using vector graphics to their full advantage, gets the solid 3D treatment and comes out looking every bit a winner. You've got a large task to complete and there's plenty of Egron's to destroy, making this combination of blasting and exploration that stands head above the competition.

★ ACE RATED 927 - ST

STAR TREK V

Mindscape ● PC £34.99dk ● MAC £34.99dk

This is easily the best interpretation of Star Trek yet. The gameplay provides absorbing and challenging hours of fun. A must for Trekkies and an entertaining space strategy /simulator for everyone else.

★ ACE RATED 930

TAU CETI/ ACADEMY

CRL ● C64 £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £14.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs ● Atari ST £19.99dk ● Amiga £19.95

Flight simulator/shoot 'em up and its sequel which are both incredibly smooth and well put together. The attention to detail is impeccable as you set off on hair-raising missions as a space cadet. In Academy you get to design your own space skimmer craft as well.

★ ACE CLASSIC

TOTAL ECLIPSE

Incentive ● C64 £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Amstrad £9.95cs £12.95dk ● Spectrum £9.95cs £14.95dk

The third game using the Freescape system is a bit of a departure from the first two, but it's still an incredible game. In total eclipse you're battling against time back in the 1930's trying to prevent the moon exploding. For arcade adventurers who love puzzles, the Freescape system is a godsend.

★ ACE RATED 907 - AMSTRAD

WIZBALL

OCEAN ● C64 £8.95cs £14.95dk ● Amstrad £8.95cs $12.95dk ● Spectrum £8.95cs £14.95dk

Become Wizball and conquer the 'colour creatures' which are intent on eliminating the spectrum and rendering the landscape grey and drab. One of the most playable games around, despite the simple scenario.

ACE Classic

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Altered Beast	6.99	—	6.99	9.99	6.99	9.99
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Super Wonderboy	6.99	—	6.99	9.99	6.99	9.99
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8 Bit Special Offers

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Here We Go Again!

We had a great response last month to the ACE Upgrade offer, so we've decided to extend it and offer some even better deals. Not only that, but we're planning a regular voucher saving system in the Pink Pages which we hope to be able to kick off next month, so keep your fingers crossed!

WHAT'S ON OFFER

This month we once again have savings of £20 on both Amiga's and ST's. Not only that, but to ice the cake Shekhana will give you a free mouse mat (worth £5) to go with the machine. This means that the Amiga Batpack, which normally retails at Shekhana at £399.99 (inc VAT) will now set you back only £379.99. For the same price, you can go for the ST Powerpack if you prefer.

If you're already in the 16-bit club, you can invest in a very useful second drive for either the ST or the Amiga, and here we've been able to further reduce the price, so that your voucher will now get you £25.00 off the normal Shekhana price of £99.95 for the drives. Amiga owners should note that the unit is a quality NEC job, complete with thru' port and on/off switch; the ST drive is also top quality, though the make may vary depending on the supplies in stock at the time of your order.

Alternatively, Amiga owners get another option: a 0.5Mbyte memory upgrade, again at a saving of £25 off the usual Shekhana price. This will set you back £74.99, or – if you want the added bonus of a built-in clock – £84.99.

Use Voucher Number One for redemption against either an ST or Amiga, and Voucher Number Two for the other options.

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You may well remember that Domark managed to capture the atmosphere and fun of *Trivial Pursuit* in their superb computer version of the same game.

Now they have done it again with *Pictionary*. The game is available on all formats and is just as fun as *Trivial Pursuit* was. As an added extra, in the computer versions you can opt to have the computer do the drawings for you – very useful if you are playing on your own.

To celebrate the successful release of the computer versions of *Pictionary*, Domark have kindly given us five copies of the original *Pictionary* board game to give away.

Well, when I say 'give away', you'll have to do a little thinking first. Read the rules opposite and then fill in your form and send it to us at *ACE*. If your entry is one of the first five correct ones out of the editorial hat then a copy of the game will be winging its way to you soonish!

THE RULES

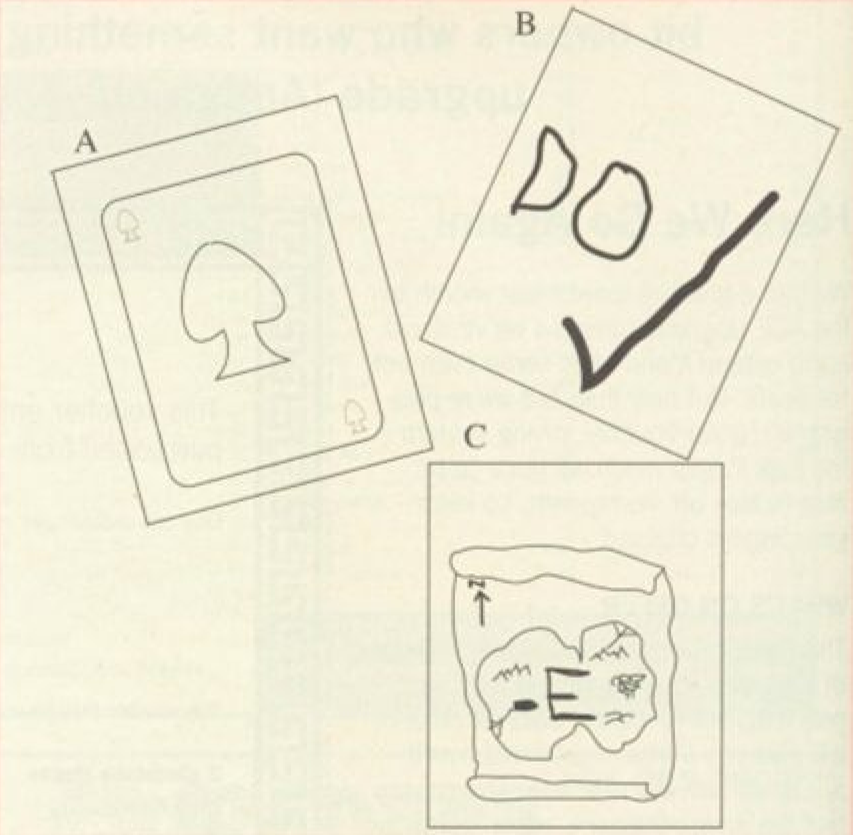
Take a good look at the three sketches opposite. Each one represents a famous computer-related name. All you have to do is work out what the three names are, Stuck? OK. Here are some clues:

A. This good read is best of the pack!

B. A tick for two guys who DO get it right when it comes to games.

C. This could chart the way to the biggest and best name in computer publications.

That should make it very simple now, so no excuses – get those forms in!



QUESTION TIME!

Answer a couple of quick questions and you could receive a mystery gift from the ACE team.– Hurry, HURRY, H U R R Y!

We are always interested to know exactly what you, the readers, like. After all, that way we can tailor the magazine's content to suit your particular tastes and interests. For that reason, we are taking this opportunity to include two simple questions with your Domark Competition Entry Form. OK you ask, what's in it for me? Well dear reader, if you complete the mini-questionnaire your entry form will be entered into a draw for a mystery piece of software for your machine. You won't know what it is until you get it, but you can be sure that it will be something that the *ACE* team were impressed with. What better recommendation do you need?

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2. How do you rate the features in this issue?	Good	Indifferent	Bad
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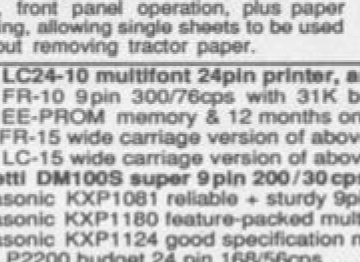

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VISA

PRIZE CROSSWORD

Set by Mips

YO! Just when you thought it was safe to put your dictionary and back-issues of *ACE* away, it's back – the formidable Prize Crossword.

Because of lack of space, we can't bring you the Prize Puzzle or any results this month, but we hope the welcome return of the Crossword will console all you brain-work addicts out there!

Next month we will bring you all up-to-date with puzzle results and compo results, so do keep clipping the forms and sending them in to us at *ACE*.

Don't forget we are anxious to hear your ideas for puzzles, quizzes, and competitions in the pink pages. Just send your ideas to:

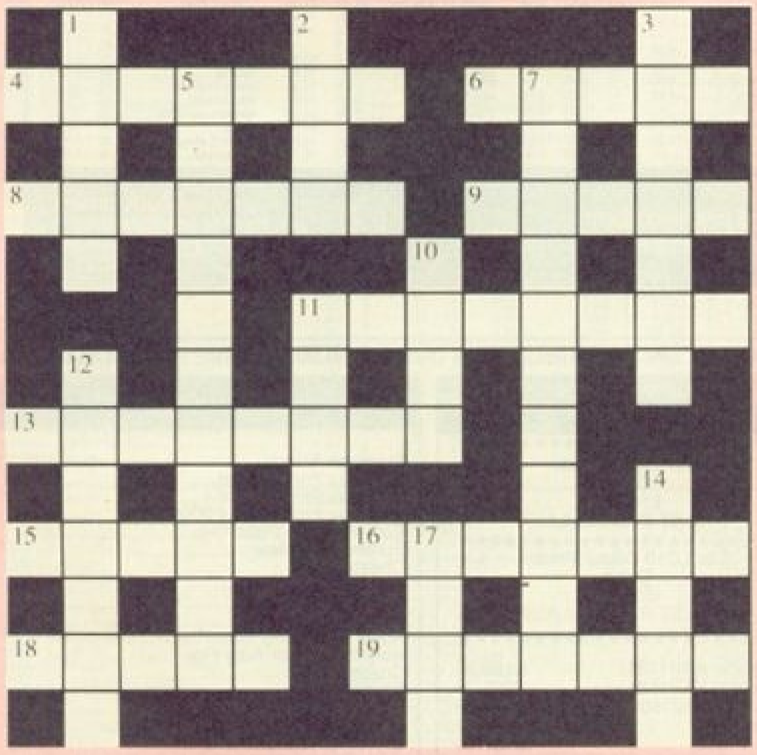
Pink Page Ideas,
***ACE* Magazine,**
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
LONDON.
EC1R 3AU.

One final point to note: Crosswords and Puzzles are now referenced by Month and Year rather then Number as they were previously. This should avoid confusion in future issues.

Well, that's enough waffle – see if you can sort this one out.

Have Fun!

FEB. '90 PRIZE CROSSWORD By Mips



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Send your completed form to: **Feb. '90 Prize Crossword, *ACE* Magazine, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON. EC1R 3AU.** to arrive not later than 1st February 1990.

THE CLUES

Across

4. Pester poor student with computer service *(7)*

6. Confess to being mad about it *(5)*

8. Harp lan designed for a software house *(7)*

9. Suez architect got out of game *(5)*

11. Arcade game to be at your disposal *(3,5)*

13. Chip Mona invented is a world-beater *(8)*

15. I get bargain that's perfect *(5)*

16. Bookmaker's piece of hardware *(7)*

18. Is in the forefront in coaxial cables *(5)*

19. Activision game in curious dialect *(7)*

Down

1. Round trip by satellite *(5)*

2. Time-share agreement about network *(4)*

3. I'm in leading Spanish city to find game *(7)*

5. Chief astrologer's position in game from US Gold *(4,7)*

7. Game GI Jordan plays with Ann *(6,5)*

10. Cosmic Osmo's house in fancy Anglo-American setting *(4)*

11. One spotted briefly on the radar screen *(4)*

12. Lute he'd played from Accolade *(3,4)*

14. Figure seen on screen representing software house *(5)*

17. Right to assist in attack *(4)*

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NOTICE!!
DO YOU HAVE ANY THING TO SELL? NEED HELP ON ANY GAMES? YES?
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FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

ACE is going places in 1990. Here's how, and why...

As a major consumer magazine, we have a duty to our readers and to the public at large to educate and inform. But as far as us gamesplayers are concerned, we also have a duty to spread the word whenever possible about computer games in general. Here's how we're going to do it...

First, the ACE Conferences. These have already been mentioned a couple of times in the magazine, but here's the full spec. Each month we will be arranging a conference between a major software house and ACE Readers. Anyone can apply for a ticket – they're free to subscribers, other readers will have to submit a coupon taken from the magazine and pay a small nominal charge (probably around £5). Lunch and drinks are provided. The only bug in the lettuce here is that places will be strictly limited so all tickets will be allocated on strictly a first-come first served basis.

The ACE Conferences are designed to put you in closer touch with the people who produce the games – you can criticise, offer suggestions, praise, or simply listen as they tell you they go about their work. Communication between us all is vital for the future success of our industry.

However, we also need to communicate to the outside world. To this end, ACE is part of the EMAP Broadcast group, working to increase the exposure of computer games on TV and Radio. Prospects are good and you'll be kept closely informed of the results of our efforts on the ACE pages.

Not only that, but ACE is also trying to set up a series of conferences with people from the film and music business, telling them all about computer games and suggesting ways in which the different industries can work together. Here at ACE we believe this to be particularly important since in a few years time computer games, films, and music will all be published on the same medium: compact laser disk. We need to start working together now to make sure that we make the best possible use of the opportunity. If you're interested in taking part and are involved in TV, film, or radio, please get in touch with us at the editorial address on page 4 (contact Steve Cooke).

Last, but not least, we've got some special treats in store for ACE readers in the pages of the magazine. All our efforts to promote the industry would be worthless if we didn't also continue to increase the number of people who read the magazine, and the satisfaction of those who already do!

First, we're introducing new sections in the magazine designed to make ACE an an even more essential purchase (is that possible?) for anyone seriously interested in computer entertainment. The sections will include:

ACE REFERENCE

Two new sections in the Pink Pages every month: ACE MUSIC and ACE GRAPHICS, supplemented by regular features in the main body of the magazine. The ACE MUSIC section will carry a complete fool-proof guide to the complexities of MIDI. You DON'T have to be a music freak to benefit from them: what they will do is give you a complete, unbiased guide to MIDI, enabling you to make your own informed decision as to whether it's something you want to get involved with. We think you will.

NEW GAMES SECTIONS

We've already introduced new designs on the feature pages. From next month it's the turn of the Screentest section. ACE already has a reputation for innovative review techniques, including the famous PIC curve; next month we'll really blow your socks off with Lightning Analysis, a new way of assessing games that will ENSURE your money is well spent. Don't miss it!

Not content with that, we'll be also be introducing a new gameplay section that takes you light years beyond the normal hints and tips found in other magazines.

Next month's issue hits the shelves on February 1st. Don't miss it!

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The BLITTER END

MICROS CAUSE SLEEPING SICKNESS!

Quote of the month: 'I haven't spent two years of my life slogging my guts out, just to let the Japanese walk in here and flood the country with consoles.' This from Steve Franklin of Commodore fame, who promises that Commodore will be able to stop the Yellow Nintendo Peril in its tracks if it should dare to mount an all out offensive on the UK. He has, he says, a secret plan. All will be revealed, he threatens, during 1990.

ACE, however, is in a position to reveal exclusively the device in question. Commodore have come up with a software 'dongle' that sits on the back of any UK-produced machine and detects the high-frequency oscillations put out by the Japanese NTY-J40 serial chip, much used by consoles. As soon as it picks up the frequency, it emits a modulated signal attuned to the brain frequency of the user, sending them instantly to sleep. The photograph above shows an early trial. The dongle (a compact unit on the left, with ribbon cable) has detected...ooops!...the signals emitting from MGT's SAM micro (on the right). The programmer (Bo Jangeborg) has collapsed insensate. Back to the drawing board, folks....

●

Talking of the MGT SAM, company PR supremo Bruce Everiss has informed us that the old ZX Microfair is now to be renamed the All-Formats Computer Fair. It will be held at the New Horticultural Hall on February 10th, doors open 10.00am, and admission is £3.00. All machines, including, of course, the SAM, will be supported. Bruce tells us that this will be your first time to see 'lots of things on SAM'. A well-dressed micro, to be sure.

●

We thought it was an impossible task, but good old Amiga Centre Scotland has managed to surpass even last month's snooze-inducing press release: 'TSSnet..', they tell us, '...is a software implementation of DECnet for the Amiga range of computers....At the DEC User Show, TSSnet was demonstrated on DEC Windows' clients running on a VAX3800, displaying an Amiga X server. Communication was established using an ethernet network.' Hmmm..Perhaps Commodore's secret weapon is not a dongle after all, but an Amiga Centre Scotland press release. Could it be that piece of paper under the disk in the photograph?

●

Jerry Hall, Deputy Advertising Manager, tells us that he recently gave birth to a bouncing baby daughter. She weighed seven pounds on arrival. Jerry's wife Cheryl was as surprised as he was: 'I never knew he had it in him,' she told us. Those of use who work on the magazine, however, are used to this sort of thing: Steve Cooke gives birth at least twice every time we go to press.

Blit-Blit!

NEXT MONTH...

Next month ACE brings you an armchair ticket to the greatest computer show on Earth: CES in Las Vegas. John Cook will be giving you the low down on all the latest American widgetry. Check it out, or remain trapped in the '80's for ever!

We're also hoping to bring you exclusive coverage of a new CD-ROM entertainment computer, and an interview with Terry Pratchett (author of the Discworld books). Best of all, however, has got to be the new ACE sections (see page 120), including the revolutionary new Lightning Analysis: a whole new way of looking at games that takes the PIC concept originally developed by ACE right into the '90s. Get wise, get your copy, and get back to the future.

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

Last month was actually a bumper issue for w-oopsies. To start with, we printed two entry forms for the Stockmarket, and the second gave the deadline as January 7th 1990. So what? Well, this just happens to mean that the entries are due in AFTER the next issue has appeared in the shops, which means that predicting 'next month's top games and software houses' isn't going to be all that tricky, is it? You can just look them up! Well, we're such decent folks that we'll stick by our guns and enter ALL corrent entries in the prize draw. First one out takes the cake...

Then there was the number for Amstrad in the ACE Diary – this should read 0277 228888, and NOT 0222 228888 as printed. Apologies to all concerned.

And finally, the sound rating for Ghostbusters II, which we called 'very impressive', should obviously NOT have been zero, but eight. Since this was the one bright spark in an otherwise gloomy review, it's doubly sad that we should have slipped up. The setting system defaults to zero and in the rush the correct value wasn't entered.

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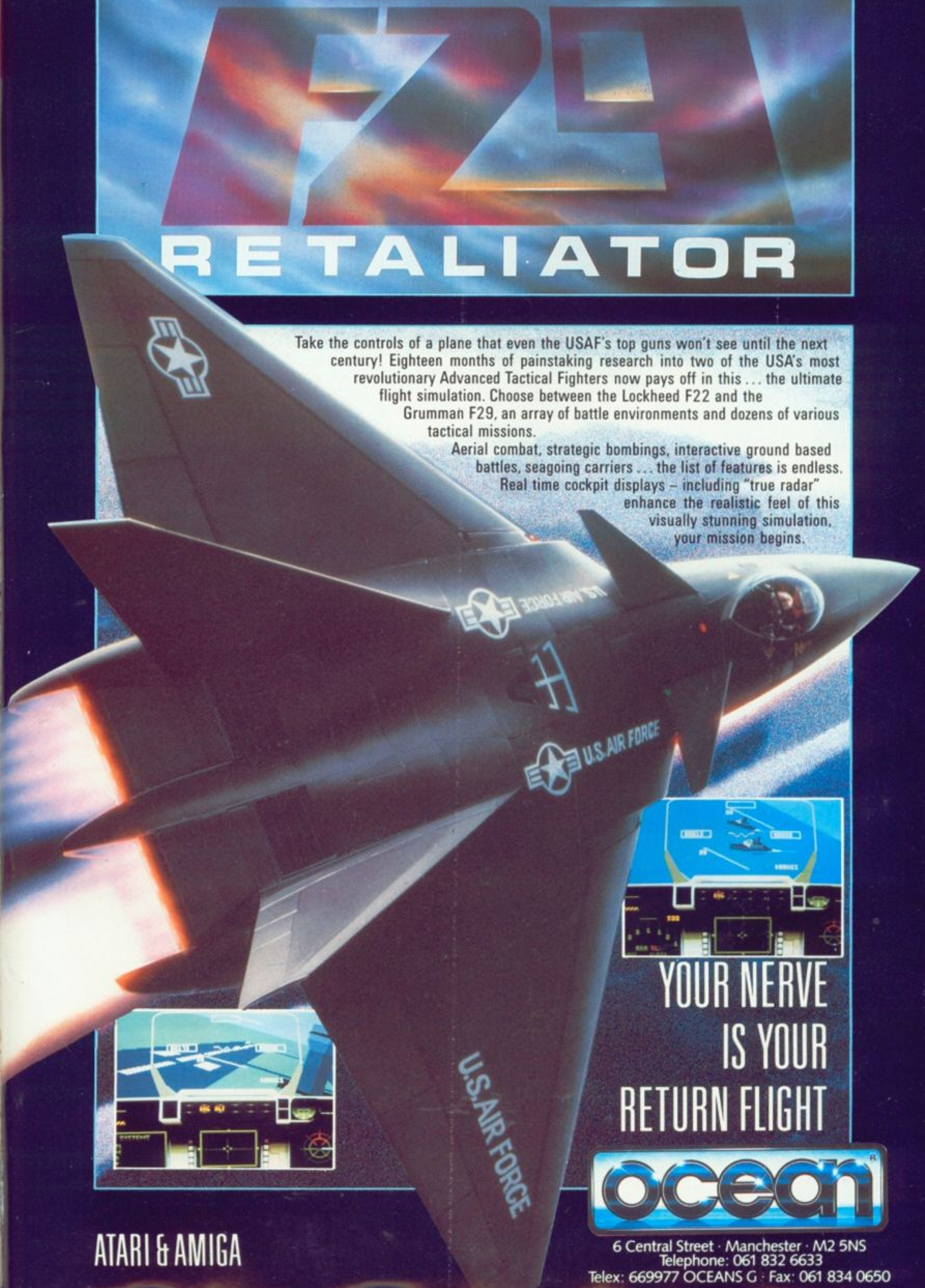

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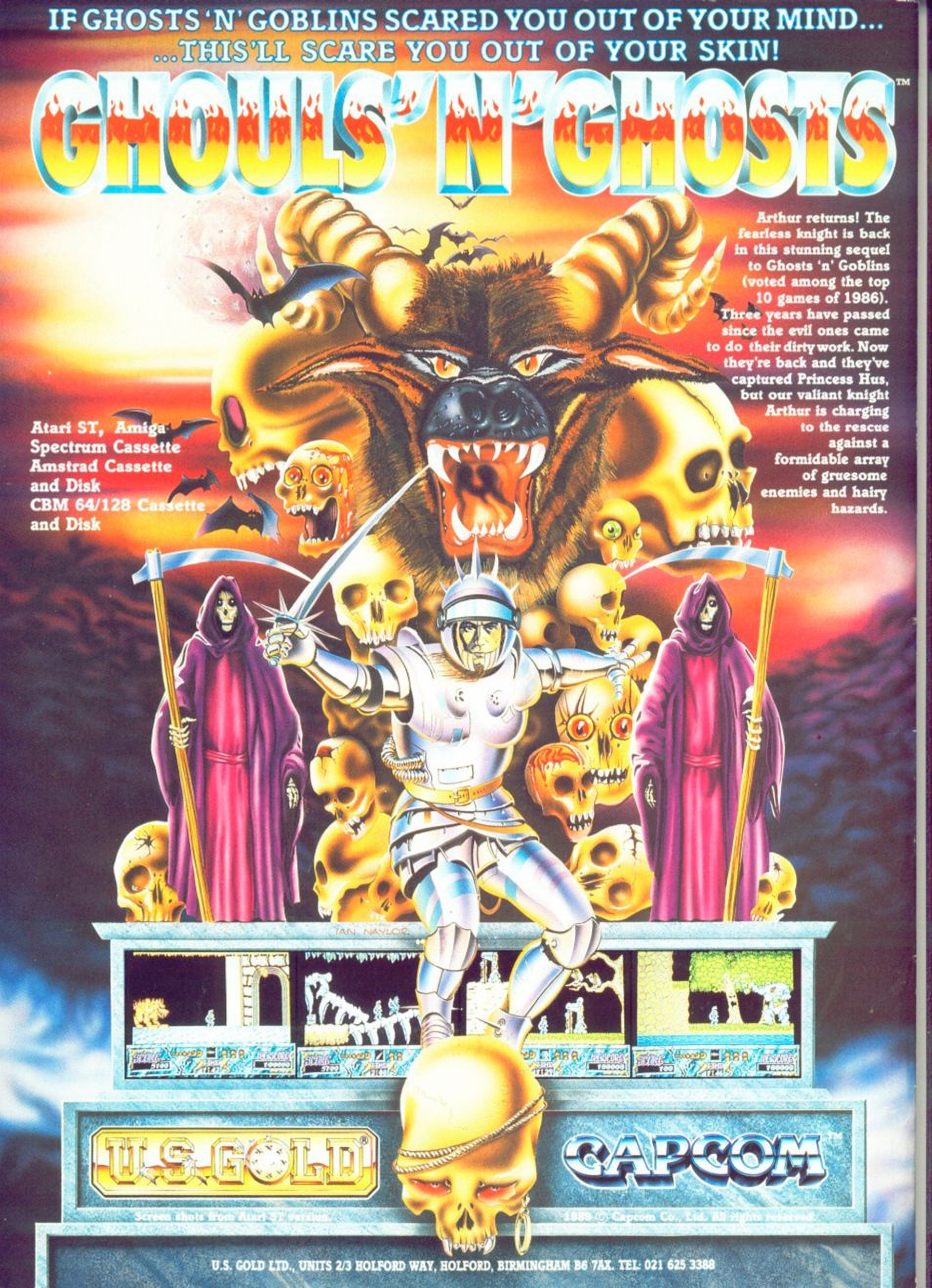

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